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The Musical Education of the Child

Stewart Macpherson

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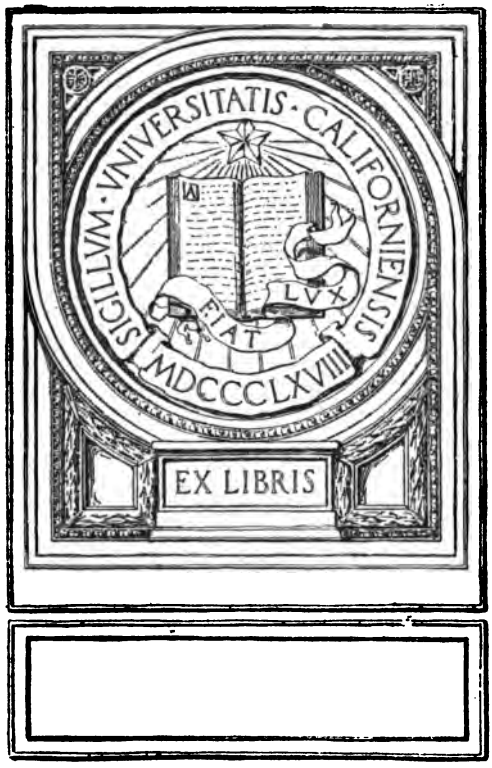

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THE MUSICAL EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

SOME THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

BY

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE

THE following pages represent in the main the substance of various lectures, addresses and articles delivered or written during the last few years, on certain aspects of the musical education of the young. In preparing them for issue in their present form, I have thought it best to preserve the informal style which best fitted the conditions under which they were originally presented. I quite realize that if one had intended in the first place to set forth, in book form, the thoughts herein contained, they would often have been expressed somewhat differently.

Feeling, however, that to alter their manner would tend in all probability to destroy whatever directness they might possess, I have ventured to leave them virtually as they first appeared, merely adding a few fresh points which seemed to drive home more completely the arguments advanced. It will doubtless be noticed that some overlapping of idea occurs from time to time in the course of these essays, and that a topic developed in one is referred to, possibly at some length, in another.

This has been inevitable owing to the fact that more than once it has been necessary to approach the same subject from different sides, and in relation to circumstances which in their nature vary considerably.

I can only hope that any apparent verbal redundancy may be compensated for by additional clearness, and by the emphasis thus laid upon certain matters of fundamental importance.

THE AUTHOR

LONDON, 1915

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE iii

PART ONE

SOME AIMS IN MODERN MUSICAL EDUCATION

THE PART OF THE EDUCATIONIST, THE TEACHER AND THE PARENT — MUSIC IN SCHOOL LIFE; ITS VALUE — PRACTICAL PROBLEMS 1

PART TWO

APPRECIATIVE MUSIC STUDY: ITS MEANING AND ITS VALUE

I. SUGGESTIONS FOR A COURSE OF CLASS-WORK IN SCHOOLS — AURAL TRAINING — THE CHORAL CLASS — CORRELATION WITH INSTRUMENTAL WORK 17

II. THE AWAKENING OF AN INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION OF MUSIC — THE TEACHER'S PART 35

PART THREE

THE MUSIC-TEACHER: HIS AIMS AND IDEALS

THE TEACHER OF TO-DAY: HIS POSITION AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY — THE MUSICAL EDUCATION OF THE "AVERAGE" PUPIL — THE CULTIVATION OF THE AURAL AND CREATIVE FACULTIES — THE TEACHING OF HARMONY — THE TRAINING OF THE TEACHER — CLASS TEACHING — PERSONALITY — NEED OF A WIDE OUTLOOK AND BROAD SYMPATHIES 53

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PART ONE

SOME AIMS IN MODERN MUSICAL EDUCATION

> "The whole development of true art is devised to engage more and more of the finer mental qualities . . . . and one of its greatest joys is to find that it helps the imperfectly provided mind to attain fuller measure of the finer qualities."
>
> SIR HUBERT PARRY

WE hear to-day much talk about the "educational ladder," and the necessity of setting up some sort of machinery by which an intelligent relationship may be made to subsist between the various stages in the educational process. The cry is all for a clear road from Primary School to University. Whether we all agree, or not, with the desirability of encouraging what, on the face of it, seems in the majority of instances to be of very doubtful value — namely, the hope of University success in the minds of those who, in the main, are as little likely to reach that goal as to reach the moon — we must all heartily endorse the axiom that every step in true education should bear some conscious relation to every other step, and be pursued with some definite end in view. In other words, any part of a child's education that is undertaken without some distinct object — not necessarily, let us hasten to add, a utilitarian object — is practically wasted energy, for it inevitably leads to a *cul-de-sac* no less disastrous in its own way than the many "blind-alley" occupations which are so familiar a phenomenon in modern life.

If we apply this thought to the teaching and learning of music,[1] how does it all work out? What is the net result of all the vast amount of effort — honest, dogged, painstaking effort — that has been and is being expended throughout the land in connection with the child's lessons in music? For that the majority of music-teachers are some of the most

[1] I am referring exclusively to the general musical upbringing of the child, and am leaving out of consideration specialized music-study as pursued at our great musical institutions.

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hard-worked and hard-working members of the community — men and women who bring to bear upon their work a degree of zeal, energy and patience which those in many another and better-paid walk of life might envy — is in reality a commonplace of experience, a truism which few will care to deny.

And yet have we not at times an uneasy consciousness that all has not been well, that much of this willing energy somehow tends to get lost in transit, and that over and over again the spectre of the "blind alley" rears its unhappy form to dishearten and depress those who are giving so largely in time and labor to the task of teaching?

The Child's music: To what is it to lead?

Many a teacher, of the right kind, has had forced upon him in his moments of reflection, the somewhat arresting thought, "What is it all to lead to? Why am I teaching this child, who really has little or no aptitude, to play the piano? Why are her parents desirous that she *should* learn? What is the object of it all? Is it only that after years of struggling she may be able to play, more or less badly, some sentimental 'Chant sans Paroles,' or some none too meritorious 'Valse de Salon,' to a circle of acquaintances who, if the truth were known, would often much rather that she didn't?" And too often the answer to such reflections is of a kind which makes the earnest teacher wonder greatly whether such work is really worth doing, in view of the fact that when the labor has been expended and the toll taken in time, energy and patience, the total impression on the pupil in the end is so miserably small, and its connection with his or her educational development so hard to seek. And thus he is driven to the comfortless conclusion that at best all he does amounts just to "something between a hindrance and a help," as Wordsworth says.

Something has been wrong: What is it? Where lies the hope for better things? In what direction must we seek for the remedy? First, it seems to me, comes the need for a clearer recognition on the part of

I. **The Educationist,**
II. **The Parent,**
III. **The Music-teacher,** of the aim and object of all the hours spent on this one subject of music by the majority of pupils during school age.

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The Educationist

To take, then, the case of the educationist (as in the main represented by the headmistresses and headmasters throughout the country), what is the attitude assumed by him towards the study of music? Does he see its drift or its function amongst educational activities? This is a very vital matter: many a music-teacher has felt keenly the "cold shoulder" in respect of his subject, for he has realized that at best it was often only *tolerated* as an evil inevitable in a present imperfect state of things, and that the hope was even cherished, in some instances, of its being relegated to the scrap-heap with the advance of public opinion on educational matters! Is it to be wondered at, then, that in cases such as these he tends to become detached from the rest of the teaching staff, when he feels that he has so little in common with them in the supreme task of educating the child — when, in truth, no one ever dreams of imagining that he can possibly have any part or lot in it?

Fortunately this condition of things is becoming rarer every day, and the educationist himself is beginning to realize that the study of music, on right lines, is by no means the least valuable factor in modern education. And if the form which this study has usually taken has seemed to him to be singularly unproductive of the very results which he has vaguely felt should be forthcoming from it, it may be well to point out that the musician has been also to blame for having been of so little use to the educationist in trying to get matters straight. Too often he has concerned himself little, and sympathized less, with the broader views of education necessary in order to appraise the whole situation satisfactorily, and to arrive at a working solution of the problem. He has, in reality, regarded the child's music as a fact in isolation, without relating it in thought to the many other subjects which go to form the necessary material of that child's whole mental development. Hence, until comparatively recently, music in the average school has represented little more than an attempt — under adverse conditions — to teach pupils to play; with what results all the world knows. It has too frequently been regarded as a harmless amusement, with little or no educational value; in other words, one of the unconsidered trifles of life.

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The times are now, however, full of promise, and something in the nature of a revolution is being created in the attitude assumed towards the pursuit of the art in our schools. But, when all is said and done, the one thing necessary if we wish to see music "come into its own," is to be perfectly clear in our own minds where the educational value of music really lies, and then, by reasoned and reasonable argument, to make it equally clear to those responsible for the curriculum. Of this I shall have more to say later on.

The Parent

Now to turn to the parent. Here is another *crux*. Many a headmistress will be found to tell you that not a few of her cherished plans for the educational advancement of the children under her care have been frustrated by the impatience of the parents for visible results. They little dream that the things that matter most are those which, as a general rule, are least subject to this rough-and-ready test of "results." Music presents no exception to the rule, and yet it is no exaggeration to say that this unreasoning demand that "Gladys" shall be able to "play something" at the end of (say) a term's work is answerable for a deplorable set-back to all real progress towards the end which those responsible for the child's work probably have in view. Personally, I should like to put one or two very plain questions to every parent. They are these:—

I. "Why do you desire your child to learn music?"
II. "What is the object of all the hours she will spend on this one subject?"
III. "Is the end to be a species of 'genteel accomplishment,' or is it to be a new means of self-expression for the child, a new bracing of the intelligence, a gradual getting into touch with the achievements of great men who have chosen to use the more subtle medium of musical sound to express — and often to express more wonderfully — thoughts for which others would use the language of words or the colors of the palette?"

I put it that these are questions that have to be settled; they cannot be shirked. Music either is a subject of real value in the development of the child, or it is not. If it is

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not, it is better to "side-track" it altogether as waste of time; if it *is*, then we must either see clearly ourselves, or trust those responsible for the education of the child to see for us, where and how it is valuable, and then allow the proper steps to be taken for it to assume its rightful place amongst other intellectual activities.

There can be no halting between two opinions if we are to see this matter through to a finish.

The Teacher

When we begin to consider the position of the teacher himself, and his attitude towards the whole question, we find ourselves face to face with another and totally distinct set of problems clamoring for solution. The first of these I have already touched upon — I mean, the importance of his realizing that music is only a *part* of the child's education, and that it is necessary to view it in the light of its relation to the rest of his studies. In this way, and in this way only, will the music-teacher be led to think out for himself the best means of presenting his subject for the consideration of those whose duty it is to organize and direct the child's work in its totality. By so doing he will inevitably be brought to see that if he is to carry conviction as to the value of his subject, he must be able to show that it can clearly add its quota in the training of the child's faculties. When he has reached this point in his reflections, it will, I think, not be long before he is compelled to arraign before the bar of his own reason much, very much, that has been accepted without demur in the past. He will be driven to wonder whether, save in comparatively rare instances, the average music-pupil (by which I mean to imply the average pupil of school-age, taught in the average way by the average teacher) has gained very much in real love or appreciation of music by what she[1] has been made to do. He will call to mind — from painful experience, perhaps — that such a pupil has often been lamentably deficient in musical perception; that her interest in music has been feeble and flaccid, and that in many an instance its pursuit has been dropped without a moment's regret so soon as her days of pupilage were over.

[1] I say "she" here, because by far the greater number of music-pupils have been and still are girls. My remarks would apply perhaps even more forcibly in the case of boys.

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Then, if he is honest with himself, he will ask how far this has been the pupil's fault, and how far, if at all, he has himself been responsible for the result. Has he gone about the business in the right way? This profitable line of thought will perhaps lead him to see that, taking the matter in its broadest aspect, the sound educational principles that have for long been admitted and understood (even if not always acted upon) in the teaching of other subjects, have been but very partially applied to the teaching of music. Perhaps one of the reasons for this may be found in the fact that the musician has, with the impatience of rule and method somewhat characteristic of the artistic temperament, been inclined to trouble himself little, and to care less, about such matters as the scientific presentation of the facts he has been called upon to impart to his pupils, or the psychology of the "human" boy or girl whom it has been his duty to teach. He has far too often regarded himself as the *artist* unfortunately compelled, by force of circumstance, to be a teacher. Hence, his method, if method it could be called, has been almost wholly empirical. Now, do not let me give the impression that I consider the work done under these conditions to be valueless. Far from it: over and over again the strong personality of a teacher has compensated to a large extent for lack of scientific order in the presentation of his subject, and the living, burning artistic impulse, characteristic of his own nature, has communicated itself in no limited degree to those under his care.

Need of sound teaching principles

But the more general the teaching of our art becomes — and it is surely fairly general to-day — and the greater the army of teachers, the greater the need of sound principles to form the bed-rock of the work to be done throughout the length and breadth of the land. It stands to reason that all are not born teachers, nor even born artists, in this army of which I speak, and it is characteristic of the notable awakening that has taken place within the last few years in connection with musical education, that scores of teachers — even those long in practice — have made, and are making, very real sacrifices to equip themselves more thoroughly, and to bring themselves into line with the best thought of the day.

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The question of the training of teachers is very much to the fore just now, and is engaging the close attention of earnest thinkers in all departments of educational life. The community is at last becoming alive to the fact that teaching is an art in itself, and that it is reasonable to expect some grasp of its principles on the part of those who intend to take upon themselves the important and responsible duty of guiding the footsteps of the rising generation. But it is not only necessary that the would-be teacher should be theoretically conversant with these principles, but that he should have opportunities of putting them to the test under the supervision of those more experienced than himself. What is vitally needed is, that such a one should be enabled to study school-classes in actual operation, to gain an insight into their inner working, and to observe how those who are in charge of such classes deal with the difficulties which constantly arise in so many changing forms, and before which he himself would probably have to retire baffled and discouraged.[1]

The training of Teachers

Now let us look at a very significant fact. They say that "all roads lead to Rome"; well, to-day, all the best thought, all the finest effort that men are making in education — and in other spheres, too, — lead in the direction of the child, the young child. It is for him that reforms are planned and carried into execution; it is for him that philanthropists, and even party-politicians, show a solicitude unparalleled in the history of the world. And it is to the child that the teacher (of any subject whatever) has begun to see that he must direct his most careful and earnest thought. Why, then, is it more than ever important to get the best *musical* teaching for the children? For the simple reason that the teacher is dealing with the most impressionable years of life, and that, if the child's latent aural and rhythmic faculties are not wisely and zealously cultivated at an early age, the difficulties in the way of real musical perception increase in geometrical progression as he passes through adolescence to adult life.

The Child

Now, I suspect that, long before this moment in our consideration of the subject, the objection may have arisen:

[1] I may say here that certain important schools are already providing such opportunities as I have been describing.

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"Oh, yes, this is all very well, and possibly it's true, but people won't *pay* for good teaching in the early stages, and declare with irritating persistence that anything is good enough for a beginner!" I know it, and I admit that foolish and ignorant ideas take a great deal of exorcising; there are many signs, though, of improvement even in this direction. But, after all, even allowing for public ignorance and indifference, it is the duty of musicians who believe in their subject, to be "instant in season and out of season" in presenting it in the right light, and to band themselves together for mutual support and encouragement in so doing. So it comes to pass that one of the outstanding problems confronting us — perhaps the one which is at the root of everything else, and from which all other problems spring — is that of a serious consideration of the very simple question I have already put, viz.: "*Why* does a child learn music?" And, in connection with this, the most hopeful of all the signs of improvement which we are witnessing to-day is, to my thinking, the fact that we are at last becoming aware of a new standard of values; matters that used to be accorded a consideration out of all relation to their real importance are now being seen in a truer perspective, and are yielding right of place to others that have hitherto suffered a neglect as universal as it has been disastrous.

It is beginning to be realized that the study of music involves much more than *merely* "learning to play," and it is encouraging to note that in many schools, through the agency of rhythmic movements in the Kindergarten stage, followed by Ear-training and Appreciation classes in the forms above, our children are now beginning to be brought into communion with music as a language to be learned, and a literature to be understood and enjoyed, and that their whole nature is being sensitized to musical impressions in a manner which must be seen and tested, to be believed by those who only know what used to be in their own childhood's days.

Music class-work

Ruskin, many years ago, claimed to show how the elements of drawing might be made a factor in general education. What he claimed for his system was that it was "calculated to teach refinement of perception, to train the eye to close observation of natural beauties, to help pupils to understand

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what masterly work meant, and to recognize it when they saw it."

What has largely been the result of this? Simply that drawing is now taught and studied in our schools, not in order that pupils may take home "pretty pictures" duly touched-up by the drawing-master for the admiration of parents and friends, but just for that very purpose of training the eye to *perceive*. Is not, I ask, the attitude of Ruskin towards the teaching of drawing exactly what should be the attitude of thinking musicians towards the teaching of their own art? It is desirable and necessary to train executants, for many obvious reasons; but it is of even greater importance to train the ear and mind to become perceptive, to foster the habit of "close observation" of the beauties of music, "to understand what masterly work means, and to recognize it" when heard.

When — as is possible in an increasing number of schools to-day — cognizance is taken of the entirely different attitude assumed by the children towards music, as a result of the newer methods of class-work, it will not be long before it is realized that the bulk of them not only may be, but are, keenly interested in *music itself*, and do listen to it and study it with real appreciation. Moreover, it is incontestable that such children receive through the medium of their aural training classes such a foundation of real musical perception that, when they come to their instrumental studies (their piano, their violin or what not) they approach them, not, as so often has been the case in the past, totally unprepared to cope with the many and great difficulties that lie in the path of all executive achievement, but with their sense of rhythm and time already largely developed, and their hearing faculties so quickened that the printed notes do actually convey some musical meaning to their minds.

Musical perception

I would, therefore, in all earnestness ask those responsible for the curriculum in our schools seriously to consider — if they have not already done so — a readjustment of musical activities such as will afford every child the opportunity of gaining those foundational musical experiences which are his undoubted birthright. I do so with all the greater confidence since it is an acknowledged fact that, when properly

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carried out, class-work in music (having for its object the training of the ear and the development of the child's appreciative powers) has most certainly the effect of stimulating the mental faculties of those who take part in it, and, as a result, of improving the standard of work in other departments.[1] The reason for this assertion may very pertinently be asked, and it seems to me that a ready answer to the question is to be found in the fact that we are here dealing with a subject which is not on the one hand purely intellectual, nor on the other hand merely emotional. The drawing upon the imaginative side of the pupil's nature — a side often much neglected in education — affords a relief from the constant demands made upon the intellect by other subjects, such as languages and mathematics, while the powers of observation and of quick and accurate perception are called into play all along the line. In such an institution, for example, as the well-conducted school choral-class, we have an invaluable agency, not only in the fostering of rhythmic, corporate action, but in the formation of character. Its influence is in some degree comparable to that of the playing-field in that, while personality counts, it demands at the same time subordination to discipline in the working out of a common purpose and a common ideal. In this it is truly democratic, in the best sense of that much used, and much abused, word.

Value of class-work in music

I think it will be conceded, then, that if all this be the case, the kind of class-work in music which many of us are advocating in these days has claims to be considered an educational subject of very real value in the all-round development of our boys and girls; in the first place, because in it there is a real call upon the *intelligence* of the pupil, and secondly, because it appeals, not only to one side of his nature, but to many. Is it not true to say that it is largely because people have realized so imperfectly that there *is* this call upon the intelligence in all real listening that they have been content to adopt the utterly passive, fish-like

The call on the intelligence

[1] In one particular school of which I have recently heard, the teachers of other subjects are always anxious to have the children immediately after their music-class, as they invariably find that they are then more alert, responsive and *alive*.

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attitude which is so common in the presence of music? Is it not because of their utter ignorance of the "logic" (if one may so say, without being misunderstood) of the musical art, that so many educated men think of it all as something vague, intangible, fluid and lacking in intellectual fibre? When, however, they are shown something of the *purposefulness* of the achievements of the best writers, their surprise is evident, and on many an occasion I have heard such expressions as "Oh, I never thought there was all that in it; I wish something of this had been pointed out to me when I was a boy, learning music!"

Boys, particularly, are often afraid or intolerant of what is popularly, but very inaccurately, described as "classical" music. The terms Sonata, Symphony and the like are more or less bugbears to them. Why? Is it not because insufficient familiarity with such things breeds shyness? Here, even the proverbial "little knowledge" would work wonders, for once at any rate falsifying the old adage as to its dangerousness, and the ranks of non-professional music-lovers would be recruited to a far larger extent with the right sort of material, more intelligent, more truly receptive and possessed of some sort of foundation in experience upon which to base their opinions and their judgments in the time to come.

The educational foundations for the Student's life-work

In the next place, we all acknowledge, in these days, that the general elementary education of the child should form a basis upon which the superstructure of the special training necessary for his life-work (whatever that may be) may safely be built. Now, it is perfectly obvious that, apart from the bearing of music-study upon the development of the general faculties, its pursuit must be undertaken with the object of training either —

I. **The amateur or music-lover (who obviously may not be able to play more than the part of a listener).**
II. **The professional musician (who, we hope, is equally a *music-lover*).**

What, however, has not been sufficiently recognized, and, as a consequence, has rarely been acted upon, is the fact that the earliest stages of the child's work should be

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practically identical in both cases, and should prepare for both these possibilities. In other words, what is taught and learned in school days should lead naturally, and without any "tearing up at the roots," towards whichever is eventually to be the end in prospect. The foundation must be the same in both cases — that is to say, the whole nature of the child must be made as responsive to music as possible, through the training of his hearing sense. We have seen something of the effect, in after life, on the amateur from the lack of this; how much more serious does it not become in the case of one who eventually purposes to follow the art of music as a career? Can we say that the early musical education of the child has invariably been such as to enable him to enter upon his studies as a professional student of music (where that has been his aim) with ear and mind prepared to benefit from his special training?

There will be few to admit this amongst those whose duty it has been, or is, to deal with such students, who not infrequently take up their work with their musico-mental faculties singularly undeveloped. They have, perhaps, a fair degree of executive skill with the voice, or upon an instrument, but little else. Upon whom does the responsibility for this state of things ultimately lie? Again, where is the remedy to be found? The answer to both these questions must be sought for in the *early stages* of the student's musical life; the tonal and rhythmic sense is usually most keen and alert between the ages of five or six and thirteen or fourteen — in other words, during school-age; and if it is not cared for then, it is extremely difficult (save in the case of specially gifted pupils) to recover lost ground in later years. Now, as the cultivation of this sense need not involve an abnormal expenditure of time, provided it is undertaken upon right lines, I plead for an unprejudiced consideration of the matter in its widest aspect by musicians and educationists alike. The school is the place of all others where the art of music, equally with other "humane" subjects, should be taught on enlightened lines, and *from a really educational standpoint.* If it is not thought worthy of this consideration, I, personally, cannot see why it should occupy a place in school-life at all; it were far better to delete it from the list of school activities.

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But I feel most strongly that the school should be in a very special sense the " nursery " of music, as of other departments of education; for here it should have the best chance of being taught with due and necessary reference to the other branches of a liberal mental upbringing. Too often, as we know, the possession of a special aptitude for music has meant that the child's general education has been grievously neglected. Even if its progress has not been prematurely checked at a time when his intelligence needs, above all things, a sane, all-round development, it has been disastrously impaired by the foolish policy, pursued by some parents, of compelling him to concentrate all his young attention, will and brain-power exclusively on the practising of some instrument. The wrong-headedness of this method of procedure should be obvious; its grim results are to be found in countless cases of arrested mental growth and the ultimate defeat of the very objects primarily aimed at.[1]

The school the " Nursery " of music

But if the schools — as I have said — are to be the " nurseries " of music, as of other higher activities, it is clear that they must attract, in increasing numbers, the right kind of teachers.

School music-teaching has often had a bad name, and not without reason. To-day things are, happily, improving rapidly, and in our better-equipped schools (especially those for girls) the musical curriculum is planned in a broad-minded spirit and carried into execution in a manner wholly admirable. But our schools, as a whole, will never be the power they might be in matters musical, until they are able to attract an army of teachers trained to deal with their subject as an important item in the mental development of the child, and capable of viewing it, as it should and must be viewed, not as a thing in isolation, but in due relation to the supreme question of that child's education in its totality.

My plea, therefore, at this stage is —

I. That the heads of our schools will carefully weigh — as many, I am happy to say, are doing to-day

[1] Such persons invariably overlook the significant fact that, almost without exception, the really great artists of to-day are men and women of wide reading and liberal culture.

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— the question of the value of music-study, and consider the form in which it may best help towards the total educational result of the child's school years;

II. That they will recognize it as one of the regular subjects (as important in its own way as languages or mathematics), and not regard it as an "extra," *tolerated* — as I have already said — simply as a more or less necessary evil in an imperfect stage of civilization!

It is reasonable to expect that in many schools instrumental lessons must be more or less extra things; I am, however, not now talking of these, but of the general foundational work in music to which most of my remarks have referred. Next, it is of the first importance, to my thinking, that the music-teacher should be genuinely *one of the school staff*, welcomed as a person who is doing valuable work in the educational development of the child — not as a visitor whom the rest of the staff hardly know, even by sight. The recognition of this, however, involves a responsibility on the part of the music-teacher to take a deeper interest than he usually has done in other branches of work than his own — and here much improvement is needed.

Then, in view of the increased and increasing demands on the music-teacher of to-day, comes the absolute necessity of the managers of our schools making the terms upon which such teachers are employed commensurate with those demands. I am not going to set out upon the thorny path of economics, but simply wish to state what is a reasonable and righteous demand, based upon the irrefutable principle that "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Into the question of the organization of the school time-table I will not enter here and now. I will merely reiterate what a well-known headmistress said to me not long ago: "Where there's a will there's a way; once convince us that a demand is right, and of real educational value, and it can be managed somehow." And, what is more, this matter *is* being managed in very many schools to-day in a way which would have been declared impossible of realization only a few years ago.

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We live in times of stress, but also, let me say, in times of the greatest hope for musical education. This being the case, the music-teacher, on his part, must recognize that, while there is no room for the "slacker," or for him who is disinclined to move out of old grooves, there is more and more scope for the fully equipped, well-educated, progressive teacher who has some kind of vision with regard to his art, who sees in it a means by which he may help to build up the mind and character of his pupil, and sow the seeds of an appreciation of beauty and purity in his soul.

The part of the Music-teacher

Educationists are now meeting the musician half-way; it is for him to present his subject in such a manner as will prove to those responsible for the educational curriculum that music can contribute its share in the process of the child's mental development, and to demonstrate that the days are past and over when the teaching of our Divine art could be associated in people's minds with young ladies' seminaries and "Papa, potatoes, prunes and prisms."

The "accomplishment" of yesterday is going to be one of the most valuable educational factors of to-morrow. Great progress has already been made; but there is much land yet to be possessed. We hear much talk — at prize distributions, public dinners and the like — of the *humanizing* influence of music. I often wonder whether those who use this expression really know what they mean, but what is very clear to me is that the humanizing influence of music is to be found in a different way from that of which these worthy speakers dream. Music is a human activity, and it is not to be approached in a spirit of mental idleness as a soporific; it is not a species of vapor-bath, in which our senses may wallow, but it is an *art* to be understood and appreciated (*i.e.*, valued) by the alert use of our mind and the exercise of our intelligence. Let us see to it that the foundations of this true appreciation are laid securely at the time of all others when mind and heart are responsive to pure and healthy impressions — I mean in childhood.

Thus, and thus only, it seems to me, shall we be enabled to create a more serious regard for the art of music as a force in our national life, worthy of the exercise of the best of our mental powers, and also a means by which those powers may in turn be developed, strengthened and enriched.

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PART TWO

APPRECIATIVE MUSIC-STUDY; ITS MEANING AND ITS VALUE[1]

> "It is probable that a . . . sort of music-teaching that would aim, not at instrumentalization, but at intelligent appreciation, might find a place in a complete educational scheme."
>
> H. G. WELLS — "Mankind in the Making" (1904)

> "Every teacher who . . . finds a new channel of access to the intelligence, the conscience, and the sympathy of his scholars will do a service . . . to the whole community."
>
> SIR JOSHUA FITCH

I

SUGGESTIONS FOR A COURSE OF CLASS-WORK IN SCHOOLS

IN "Some Aims in Modern Musical Education," I tried to show that the precise degree of importance attaching to the study of music in the curriculum of our schools is, notwithstanding considerable progress in this direction during the last few years, still a matter concerning which much uncertainty prevails, even amongst those who are immediately responsible for the formulation and administration of that curriculum. On the one hand, there are those who can see in music-study little more than the pursuit of a polite accomplishment, and regard its introduction into the school time-table as an intrusion, as unwelcome as it is (in their opinion) useless from an educational point of view. On the other hand, there are those who feel that there is in such study a real educative and moral value, but who nevertheless have an uneasy suspicion that the form it usually takes does not correspond in its results with their own ideas as to its worth.

[1] Many of the ideas contained in this essay originally appeared, in 1910, under the title of "The Appreciative Aspect of Music-study."

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Amongst this latter class are to be found many headmasters and headmistresses who — it may be, more or less vaguely — realize that the study of music might be made much more fruitful of good than it is; but who, either through lack of specialized knowledge on their own part, or indifference and apathy on the part of the parents of the children under their care, have until now been unable to see their way clearly enough to make any experiments in a new direction — especially knowing that any such experiments might not inconceivably be productive of opposition from the less progressive members of their musical staff.

That we are on the eve of considerable changes in methods of music-study as applied to the general run of our boys and girls, is becoming increasingly evident to the careful observer. That changes are desirable and even vital, if we wish for progress, can no longer be doubted, and it is in the hope of contributing from one's own experience something which may be helpful to those who are seriously considering these newer aspects of the subject that I have ventured to put the following thoughts together.

I think it will be admitted without cavil that it has taken this country of ours many years to develop any sort of order out of the chaos in which the general education of our young people was for long involved. Latterly, however, we have seen great strides in methods of teaching, in systematized study, and even in popular interest in the training of the young.

Improvement in specialized Music-study

The improvement that has been steadily going on in the general equipment of our boys and girls has been felt, too, in the department of special studies, of which music is one. The upward trend of things has been for some time particularly noticeable — especially in composition and piano-playing — in our great schools of music; and I should like to say here that no one appreciates with more honest admiration than I myself the great work that has, during the last decade or so, been wrought out by a few eminent piano-teachers who, by reducing the *technique* of performance to a more or less exact science, have been able not only to criticise and correct the faults of their pupils, but in every case to give them a carefully reasoned and scientific method of overcoming the difficulties, physical and

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mental, that crowd upon the learner at certain stages of his instrumental course. For those who have been in the van of the crusade against technical slovenliness and incompetence, no thanks are too great for having effected a much-needed reform.

But, striking as all this remarkable executive achievement is, the fact remains that, speaking broadly, the teaching art, so far as music is concerned, has yet to be systematized, and musical education coördinated with, and properly related to, the child's other studies.

Music-study in relation to the average Child

It is necessary, on the one hand, that the place of music in his mental development should be more clearly recognized and valued by those not specially concerned with music-teaching; and, on the other hand, that the music-teacher should have a wider outlook, and realize that his or her art is only one means out of many whereby that child's nature is to expand and open out to the beauties and wonders of the world in which it finds itself.

There, in these last words, it seems to me, lies the root of the whole matter, namely, the "keeping ever alert the faculty of wonder" in the child's soul. As a recent writer has said: "To take life as a matter of course — whether painful or pleasurable — that is a spiritual death, from which it is the task of education to deliver us." [1]

Now, it is at least an open question whether the general teaching and learning of music, as it has been usually understood in the past, has ever had more than a somewhat remote connection with such a thought as this. True it is that at times a teacher, with the instinct of a real lover of his art, will have been found to awaken that sense of delight in, and wonder at, the beauties of *music itself* which should be the heritage, not of the few, but of the many. But I think that it may be accepted as a fact not easily controverted that, in the huge majority of cases, the piano-lessons which our young people have had to take week after week, and which alone have represented "music" to them, have done little to stimulate those faculties the arousing of which I have alluded to above as the aim and end of true education. At the very least, we may ask ourselves, does this special form of activity stand out in after years in their thoughts as something which

[1] "Let youth but know," by "Kappa."

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was, even in earliest days, a joy and a delight — something which drew them insensibly, perhaps, but none the less surely, towards the Pure and the Beautiful?

Sterile Music-teaching

"All music-teachers acknowledge the difficulties they have to contend with, thanks to our indiscriminate custom of setting nearly every child to learn the violin or piano, regardless of natural tendencies or physical disabilities. What do these children really learn about music? Many of them after four or five years of drudgery acquire a limited repertory of pieces, forgotten almost as soon as they are learned, the execution of which can, one imagines, only give satisfaction to the most fond and unmusical parents. This is no reflection upon their teachers, whose conscientious efforts to make executants out of the most unpromising materials involve a labor even more severe than that which is imposed upon the children themselves." [1]

Agreeing as I do with every word of the above quotation, I would yet give every boy and girl the opportunity of learning some instrument (the piano, for obvious reasons, being of especial value, as being self-contained); and I would encourage such instrumental study by every legitimate means. But in a large body of young people it stands to reason that there will be some whose interest will not eventually lie in the overcoming of the many muscular and other difficulties connected with the learning of an instrument; that there will be others who are physically unfit for the strain of the work; others, again, whose fingers are hopelessly incapable of achieving any sort of instrumental control. Moreover, the amount of time possible for the necessary practice will, owing to the pressure of other studies and of examinations, often be absurdly inadequate for the attainment of anything like a passable degree of executive skill. Are we, then, to cut off such pupils from musical influences altogether? Surely not. Distaste or inability in the matter of learning to play the piano is hardly to be regarded as a proof either of an unmusical nature or of a dislike for music; on the contrary, such young people are often naturally predisposed music-wards, and might become interested and intelligent listeners, capable in time of real, critical appreciation of the art in its highest forms. In the case of literature, we should not go to the length

[1] From a pamphlet on the educational value of the Pianola, by Sir Henry J. Wood, the eminent conductor.

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of depriving them of good books if they were to prove themselves unable to recite, or unfit to write verses; why, then, starve them musically simply because from comparable reasons they prove themselves unable to reproduce with any degree of success the *musical* literature on the piano? After all, in literary studies it is the *literature itself* which is the important thing to bring the pupil into touch with; it matters comparatively little, so far as appreciation goes, whether that pupil can recite before an audience or not. So, surely, in music, what we need is an appreciative grip of the *music itself*, and I am convinced that we shall never create a community of really intelligent listeners capable of estimating with any degree of discrimination the works with which they are brought into contact at concerts and on other similar occasions, until we realize that their training shall consist of something more than the abortive struggles at the keyboard, which at present too often pass as musical education in many schools and private families.

Importance of appreciative study

Again, for fear of being misunderstood, I wish to repeat with emphasis that I do not undervalue good instrumental teaching. Far from it! For those who have the necessary aptitude, the very fact of reproducing for themselves at the instrument some, at least, of the music with which they become familiar, is the greatest incentive to further progress; but it is most essential to remember that the constructive or executive side of music-study is largely distinct from the *appreciative* side, and it is necessary to see that the true appreciation of music is not — in the first place — dependent upon the amount of executive skill acquired by the listener. This may conceivably be almost *nil*, without impairing the critical faculty, provided that from early days the student has been brought into touch with what is best in our art, coupled with some sort of sensible elucidation of its design and purport, imparted by a teacher capable of dealing with this aspect of the subject. An article written some time ago in the "Crucible" sums up the matter aptly in the following passage:

Appreciative, as distinct from executive, Music-study

"Except in the most superficial way, our education of the present day fails to impart that sort of training which is an essential condition for any intelligent appreciation of the higher forms of

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music. A knowledge of musical form or design, of harmonic coloring, and of the outlines of musical history and development, is just as vitally necessary for the rational enjoyment of music as the perception of line and form and color for the appreciation of a great picture. Yet, so long as we persist in teaching our boys and girls to play, without giving them this essential education in the vital facts of music, we are simply giving them a possibly useful course of finger and hand gymnastics, with, in some cases, a certain amount of emotional development; but we are *not* training them to become intelligent *listeners*, or enabling them to make in their after life any extended acquaintance with that great literature of music which should be open to all."

Ear-training

It should be self-evident that the foundation of all real progress in music-study lies in the training of the ear — the ear of the child, with its untold possibilities; and yet it is just in this department that the state of music-teaching, even to-day, is often so singularly and lamentably deficient. Happily, since these words were first written, in 1910, a very welcome degree of attention has been given to this subject of Aural training, and among the many signs of a growing interest in matters connected with the musical education of our girls and boys none is likely to be productive of more important results. This aspect of the main question has already formed the basis of discussion at purely educational conferences; it now boasts the possession of a considerable amount of literature dealing with the many details connected with its pursuit, and — in short — it has been raised in the space of three or four years from the position of the utterly disregarded fad of a few so-called " cranks " to that of a vital topic of consideration amongst those whose business it is to deal with the up-bringing of the rising generation.

Notwithstanding all this, the fact remains that in countless schools little or nothing is as yet done in this direction, and, although the eye is trained daily in many different ways, the sensitiveness of the ear is allowed to remain undeveloped and indeed uncared-for. Have we not, many of us, vivid recollections of the way in which, at our own music-lessons, our attention as children was called to *notes* (not sounds), and our fingers were taught to make movements the sounds produced by which we were never encouraged in any sense to realize aurally, or to assimilate mentally? I find it difficult to use language strong enough to express all that

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I feel with regard to this woefully neglected subject of ear-training. It would seem that it has taken people a very long time to appreciate a fact in itself so obvious and even axiomatic as this: that music reaches us through the ear, and that it is the precise nature of the impression on the ear which constitutes the sort of grasp we get of the music. Moreover, the idea has prevailed that an "ear for music" was purely a gift, and that if it were not in evidence at once it was of no use to try to develop it! Contact with a very varied range of students from many parts of the world has forced upon me the conclusion that (perhaps owing to the idea I have mentioned above) little or nothing has as a rule been done for the average girl or boy in the matter of the cultivation of the ear during the period of greatest sensitiveness — I mean, between the ages (roughly speaking) of six and fourteen.[1] And seemingly, so little has this omission been considered as a bar to musical progress, or even to the following of the art as a career, that I have often, in response to a question or two directed to this matter, received the answer in a perfectly contented and even cheerful tone of voice: "Oh, I must say that my ear is my weak point!" What would be thought of a student of painting saying with equal *nonchalance* that his eye was his weak point! As a consequence of this defect in early training it too often happens that those who have to deal with the more advanced and intimate aspects of music-study, such as the teaching of Harmony, are constantly finding themselves up against that "brick wall" of an unresponsive ear, which renders nugatory nine-tenths of their efforts to make such study a real and vital part of the development of the musical sense and sensibility.

Appreciation classes

The next point it is most necessary for us to recognize is that, if in literary study — as will surely be granted — it is with literature itself we wish our pupils to become acquainted, so in musical study it should in like manner be *music itself* with which they should come into direct contact, presented to them in such a way that its beauty and its worth may at least have a chance of making an appeal to their sympathies. It is often the case, as we all know, that the

[1] Observation has shown that not more than two per cent of quite young children are totally destitute of ear, but that the faculty of distinguishing sounds and appreciating rhythmic detail rapidly dies down, if not systematically trained.

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only music, of the right kind, our young people do get into touch with, save in distinctly musical homes, is merely that with which they themselves are struggling, in order to overcome those very technical difficulties to which allusion has been made. This frequently amounts to little more than Czerny Studies and Clementi Sonatinas, with a few pieces by Gurlitt or some other such composer to supply the more recreative element in their work.

We should remember that a child of average intelligence can take in and assimilate much more than he can reproduce, and it is crushing to his musical understanding, and indeed to his love of music at all, that he should be limited in his range of serious musical impressions merely to the pieces he can play himself. Fortunately, we do not nowadays postpone introducing the child to the beautiful stories of classical or modern days, as told by great authors, until he can read them easily for himself. Should we not, therefore, do something towards getting him into similar effective communion with *music* — not merely with what he is (to quote the amusing expression of a well-known headmistress) " contaminating with his own dirty little fingers," but with music *really well played* and simply commented upon by a cultured and enthusiastic teacher, who knows how to approach the youthful mind in such a way as to make it respond both to the music and to the few words of sympathetic explanation? Feeling all this very strongly, I have for some time past pleaded for the formation — particularly in our schools — of Musical Appreciation classes, in which the teacher shall so play to the pupils, giving them at the same time help in the recognition of the character and purport of the music, and in the following of the composer's design, in order that the power of assimilating that music — at any rate, in some degree — in a conscious and reasonable way may gradually be developed, and the foundations of intelligent listening laid with some sort of security.

The foundations of appreciation

In the earliest stages, where a class consisted of quite young children of Kindergarten age, the music would, of course, be of an entirely recreative nature (such as merry nursery tunes, and the like) and the aim should merely be the awakening of the child's imagination and of his rhythmic sense by means of an attractive musical stimulus, to which

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he should be allowed to give himself up in unrestrained enjoyment. By degrees, however, he should begin to realize such fundamental matters as regularity of pulse, the " trend of the phrase," and the periodical recurrence of musical ideas. Afterwards comes the more intellectual process of *knowing* what happens; he becomes acquainted with differences of pitch and of time, always by means of observing what takes place in the music to which he listens; he learns gradually how such things are expressed in notation, and — a matter of great importance — his own creative powers are aroused and encouraged, not with the object of breeding a race of composers — which would be as absurd as it would be beside the mark — but in order that the power to *originate*, however feebly, may be developed in him, and so afford him another and most valuable means of self-expression. When the ear is thus trained to observe and to apprehend at an early age, the possibilities of development along these lines are almost endless — that is, in the case of children of average intelligence, possessing no obvious physical disability with regard to their hearing sense.[1]

Where, however, the child's ear has been neglected, and he reaches fifteen, sixteen or seventeen years of age without any attention having been paid to its cultivation, it is not to be wondered at that, in most instances, whatever sensitiveness of aural perception there may have been originally, becomes dulled, and the teacher cannot hope to accomplish so much as in the case of the children we have been considering. But even here Appreciative music-study steps in to provide the means by which the spark of interest in the art, however feeble it may seem to be, may be fanned into a flame of real enthusiasm by a zealous and capable teacher. It is clear that a training in the appreciation of the finer and more " delicate impressions and distinctions," possible when the ear has been cared for systematically from early childhood, will have to give way to a broader and less minute study of the more outstanding and striking features of the music; but along such lines there is endless scope.

Appreciative study and the neglected ear

Is no attempt, then, to be made to awaken the dormant faculties of such pupils as those to whom we are now referring,

[1] Reference should here be made to the footnote on page 23.

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and to encourage some response in their minds and hearts to the beauties which lie locked away in that treasure-house, whose key has, perchance, never yet been found? Surely something may be done; something can and should be done.

Suggestions for School Class-work

In offering a suggested course of class-work, I am fully aware that conditions vary in different schools; and, as a consequence of this, the following scheme must be regarded as indicating the main *principles* to be aimed at and carried out in sound music-teaching, rather than as constituting any hard-and-fast system to be adhered to without reference to local requirements.

When "The Appreciative Aspect of Music-study" first appeared five years ago, I based the scheme upon a recognition of three main factors of importance (other than good instrumental teaching, with which the articles were not immediately concerned) in any kind of successful musical education of the mass of our young people. These factors were: —

I. **Singing at sight**	Combined in the work of a Singing-class.
II. **Systematic ear-training**	
III. **Opportunities for listening to music,**	*i.e.*, work in an "Appreciation" class.

Since then, further experience and consideration of the matter have led me to the belief that, although in some instances the above arrangement of class-work might advantageously be followed, a better, and on the whole more practical, division of the different branches of study is to be found in the scheme which follows. This assumes two types of class for general music-study, carefully graded throughout the school according to the age and ability of the pupils: —

I. **The Aural-training Class: for the definite training of the hearing sense (by means of Sight-singing, Musical Dictation, Melody-construction, etc.), and the provision of regular opportunities for hearing good music.**

II. **The Choral Class: for the practice of correct breathing and other points of voice-production, and for**

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the study of the many unison, two-part and three-part songs available for school use. (Regular practice in Sight-singing should also form part of the work of this class.)

With regard to the question of the practicability of establishing such classes in the average school,[1] it is often urged that the time-table will not admit of any considerable extension of the time allotted to music. It should, however, be recognized that what is really needed in most cases is less in the nature of an increase than of a redistribution of the time given to existing activities. Most schools possess a Singing-class, and very many also a " Theory " class. The time already devoted to these may, and can, well be utilized for the more systematic and effective cultivation of the pupil's musical perception. The so-called " Theory " class is, as a rule, occupied with little more than questions of notation, too often divorced from the child's actual musical experiences, and a change of method here on right lines should result in the class ceasing to be one in which mere *symbols* are learned and memorized, and becoming one in which such symbols take their rightful place with regard to the musical facts they represent.

The time allotted to each of the classes (I) and (II) might vary, according to school arrangements, from thirty to sixty minutes per week. In many large High-schools the time now being devoted to each class is *forty* minutes per week, and this basis of time may be regarded as generally satisfactory. In the case of the lowest forms, shorter and more frequent lessons are infinitely more valuable, and it is recommended that, in the case of quite young children, brief daily lessons, of not more than fifteen minutes, should be the rule. From the very fact, already alluded to, that conditions vary so widely in different schools, it is hardly practicable to set forth in detail the various stages into which the work to be accomplished by the two types of class now under consideration should be divided. Such division must necessarily depend largely upon the size of the school and the ages of the pupils. In the case of the Choral class it is, save

[1] I am here considering the matter from the standpoint of girls' schools. A somewhat differently constituted scheme would be necessary in the case of those for boys.

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in very large schools, usually sufficient to arrange the pupils in three grades: Junior, Middle and Senior, the youngest children — those of Kindergarten age — being excluded in the above distribution, for reasons set forth below. It is better, on the other hand, that the Aural-training classes should be graded more minutely, containing, if possible, not more than about fifteen pupils, in order that the teacher may give attention to each member of the class as occasion demands — a matter that is not so pressing in the case of work on the choral side.

(*a*) Outline of Work in the Aural-training Classes

Kindergarten Stage. — At this stage the aural-training should take the form of

I. **Rhythmic bodily movements, and**
II. **Singing *by rote* of simple nursery-tunes and national songs, no attempt, as yet, being made in the direction of reading the music, either from the Staff, or from Sol-fa.**

The work should be quite untechnical, and should simply have as its object the "laying up in the children's minds of a store of [pure and healthy] experiences to which the teacher may appeal when the more formal systematic study of music commences." [1]

The Rhythmic movements should at first be entirely free, the spontaneous response of the children by running, skipping and dancing,[2] to the strong rhythms and marked character of the simple music played or sung to them. As Miss Marie Salt well says, in her interesting "Music and the Young Child": [3] —

"The child's nervous system is responsive to sound and rhythm at a very early age, and his normal and healthy development requires it, as it does exercise, language, and toy-play. Musical education begins in the cradle with the lullaby and nursery-song of the mother. This indirect training must be continued in the school

[1] Mrs. J. Spencer Curwen. — "The Child Pianist."
[2] Not dancing, I need hardly say, in which the movements are *taught*. They must be the child's own natural response to the music.
[3] "Music and the Young Child." Appendix to Part I. of "Aural Culture based upon Musical Appreciation," by Stewart Macpherson and Ernest Read. (The Boston Music Co.)

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—still indirect in character in the Kindergarten and infant school, though gradually preparing for the more intellectual as well as the more purely emotional enjoyment of a later stage."

As the children progress, and the ideas of pulse, accent, time and phrase-rhythm are brought to their notice, the use of instruments of percussion — drums, triangles, cymbals and tambourines — is most helpful.

The more definite mental realization of the various kinds of time and of the divisions of the pulse may also be assisted in a marked manner by bodily movements at this early point in the pupil's work. Later on, in the adolescent stage, it seems to me that it is wiser to discontinue the use of such movements — at any rate, in normal cases; but with the young child they are of considerable educational value, as they harness his natural excess of motor-activity to the teacher's own ends.

Lower and Middle Forms. — During the period succeeding that of the Kindergarten, between the ages, approximately, of seven and fifteen years, the more intellectual aspects of aural training will, of necessity, claim a larger share of attention. The pupils should then make acquaintance with the element of tonality (or the relationships of sounds within the key), by means at first of the Movable-Do, or the Tonic Sol-fa syllables, passing on in due sequence to the mental realization of the various keys, and their relationship one to the other. In this way, that power of mentally hearing the sounds indicated by the printed or written signs is acquired, which in itself is one of the first steps towards any real musical progress.[1] In the course of this work singing at sight and musical dictation play an important part, and both of these activities, even apart from their musical importance, are of the highest value in the development of mental concentration, an even momentary lapse of attention being fatal to success. Eye, ear and mind are here called upon to act in concert, and I know of nothing which tends to cultivate quickness of decision and accuracy of thought better than systematic practice in both these aspects of ear-training.

Side by side with the realization of pitch and key should go the grasping of the more complex phases of time, rhythm,

[1] The poor results so often achieved in instrumental work are due, in nine cases out of ten, simply to the lack of this mental correlation of sound with symbol.

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and the elements of musical shape or form, the aural study of intervals, the recognition by ear of the simpler harmonies of the key, and that awakening of the creative instinct in the pupil to which allusion has already been made. But it is necessary that all this work, instead of being divorced from musical experiences (as has so often been the case in the old " Theory " classes), should be actually based upon real, living music with which the pupil is first brought into sympathetic contact, and afterwards " re-sees " in the light of increased knowledge and growing aural perception.

While the more technical details of the subject [1] are being brought to his notice in such a way that they are no mere items of " useful musical knowledge," but a real development of his hearing powers, the more æsthetic side of " Appreciative " study should be cared for regularly by the teacher. The class then should become, from time to time, what may be described as a genuine " Musical Appreciation class," in which — as I have suggested earlier in these remarks — the teacher should play some attractive musical composition, for the purpose of studying its broader outlines with his pupils, and of encouraging an appreciation of its character, its plan and its many features of interest.[2]

With the youngest forms (as was stated on page 24), the aim should be to make these classes supply the more recreative element, and to stimulate the imagination. Later on, the pupils should be made to realize that a more insistent call upon their faculties of observation is a natural and legitimate demand of their study. By means of the Appreciation class the pupils may gradually be brought into close communion with much beautiful and worthy music which otherwise would be a sealed book to them until such time as they should be able to laboriously decipher it for themselves at the keyboard. At the same time they gradually become aware of the artistic application of much of the more technical

[1] Although no specific mention has been made of what is usually known as "Elements of Music," but which would be better termed "Elements of Musical Notation," it is, of course, assumed that such purely notational matters as Time-signatures, Key-signatures, abbreviations, ornaments, etc., would be introduced in their necessary connection both with the class-work and with the instrumental lessons.

[2] In undertaking such work, the teacher should seek to implant in the pupils' minds the sense of personal relationship towards the great masters, so that they may realize — however vaguely at first — that music, in actual fact, is *human* expression, one of the many channels

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side of their musical education, which, by this means, is seen in its proper focus.

Upper Forms. — Where the aural training of the pupils has been cared for systematically throughout their earlier years, the work in these forms, besides including the more advanced aspects of pitch, time, rhythm and construction, should deal with the elements of keyboard and written Harmony — always upon a distinctly aural basis. The kind of constructive work in Harmony so often carried out in school, in which little or no appeal is made to the ear, and which results merely in the "architectural" piling-up of chords on a figured-bass — chords of whose sound the pupil is frequently in complete and blissful ignorance — is absolutely valueless from a musical point of view.

On the "Appreciation" side a stage should have been reached at which the Sonatas, Symphonies, etc., of the great masters could profitably be studied, and the pupils should be in a fit condition to benefit from good chamber or orchestral concerts, and also from lectures by specialists on the great masterpieces, particularly in view of such concerts.

(*b*) Work in the Choral Classes

Junior Division. — This class should be planned so as to include most of the youngest children above Kindergarten age, and in it the aim should be to teach them (a) to breathe properly, a point of great importance, not only musically, as the foundation of pure vocal tone, but *physically;* (b) to sing sweetly and with simple, unaffected expression and clear enunciation, the many unison songs available for school use, such as the folk-songs of all countries, and certain selected songs.

Middle Division. — The work here should include, as in the Junior Division, breathing exercises and exercises for

through which the thoughts of men are communicated to the world. Here, the judicious use of biographical and historical details would have to be considered. It would be sufficient, in the majority of cases, for the teacher merely to sketch in a few brief and simple words the surroundings of the composer whose music might be the subject of study, and the conditions under which he lived and worked; by so doing he would help very materially in placing his pupils in an attitude of sympathy towards the music itself. But, as stated in Part II of "Aural Culture based upon Musical Appreciation," "in no case should the teacher yield to the temptation to allow mere 'story-telling' to usurp the time that should be devoted to a study of the music."

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gaining control and flexibility of the vocal organs. The material for practice and performance might well include, in addition to unison songs, Rounds for equal voices, and other pieces in which the voices are divided into first and second trebles (or trebles and altos). In making this division of the class, great care should be taken not to strain voices naturally lower in pitch, by making them sing higher than they can with perfect ease. The teacher should also exercise great discretion in the choice of music, and should see to it that only compositions of a high standard of artistic merit are used in the class.

In all the classes, careful attention should be given not only to pure production of the voices, but to those matters of phrasing and expression which are the basis of artistic performance.

Senior Division. — In this division, in addition to work of a similar character to that undertaken in the Middle Division of the school, it might be found possible to reach a standard of execution sufficient for the study of a short Cantata for equal voices. In large classes, moreover, three-part songs might be practised with advantage, but it need hardly be said that the feasibility of this would depend largely upon the downward compass of the voices to which was entrusted the lowest (or Alto) part. The teacher should be most careful to avoid strain at either end of the voice.

Some sight-singing should be done regularly in *all* the Singing-classes, and to the end that this may be carried out without conflict of idea and method, and in order to avoid overlapping, the Singing-class teacher should be in close and constant touch with the teacher of the Aural training classes.[1]

I need hardly say that, throughout the whole school-period, it is of the first importance that the class-work, whether in Aural training or in Choral-singing, should be properly correlated with the instrumental lessons that the various pupils might be taking; consequently it is, as I have stated above, vitally necessary that the several teachers engaged in dealing with musical subjects in the school should have constant opportunities of comparing notes, and so of acting in concert. Frequently, it must be confessed, such teachers carry out their duties in complete ignorance of all

[1] Obviously, in many smaller schools the two sides of the work might be undertaken by one and the same teacher.

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that is going on outside their own special departments, to the serious and often irretrievable detriment of the work as a whole.

Concluding Remarks

Such, in rough outline, is a plan of work, the adoption of which would, in my opinion, tend to awaken a real, living interest in *music itself*, among our young people, and go far towards creating more discriminating and intelligent audiences in the future. I realize that it is not an easy task to carry out heroic measures of reform. That there will be prejudices to be overcome, apathy to be combated, even hostility to be met, one knows only too well. Quite recently, an eminent educationist, who is wholly in sympathy with the ideas set forth in this article, told me of an admirable young teacher who, when found by her superior mistress playing to her pupils and giving them some sort of intelligent insight into the features of the compositions they were studying, was told that she was " wasting time," that the pupils were to play and she to listen, and that if she did that sort of thing again she would be dismissed! The old idea, that the only thing which matters is that music-pupils *must* learn so many pieces per term, to show off before admiring relatives and friends, still holds sway, unfortunately, in far too many instances, and difficulty and opposition will doubtless be met with by those who desire to carry out really educative principles in the musical curriculum.

I know, too, that much will need to be done before many parents will look with sufficient seriousness upon the aspects of musical education which we have been considering, and the advertisement of the enterprising local teacher who guaranteed " thirty cheerful tunes " at the end of a term, is still, in principle, the index of what is too often required and demanded!

On the other hand, that some such scheme of work as I have adumbrated should meet with the sympathy of those interested in the training of the young, would be, I think, a matter upon which one should be able to count; since, after all, such a scheme only means the application to music of methods already applied successfully to other branches of education. And I would like to impress upon those responsible for the curriculum in our schools that the kind of study

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which has been outlined in this article does not only concern the professional student; it is *a necessity for all*, if we would make music worthy — as indeed it is — of an acknowledged place in modern education, instead of being relegated to the position of a mere amiable pastime, the time devoted to which is grudged — and, as things are at present, more or less naturally grudged — as entailing a diverting of attention from subjects of apparently greater value.

Educationists are beginning to see that the " appreciative " side of music-study affords a basis for cultivating the child's power of observation, which in many ways can hardly be surpassed; and even if the matter ended there, my plea for this kind of training would have established its claim to consideration. But that is by no means all; I am convinced that along some such lines lies the one chance of arousing the latent musical faculties of the majority of our young people, of giving them a real insight into the subtler æsthetic and intellectual beauties of the art, and of cultivating a true interest in music — *quâ* music — amongst the great bulk of the community, where, as I have remarked in another place, I feel " there exists a vast mass of musical intelligence which only needs a stimulus in the right direction for it to become a most valuable and powerful factor in the musical life of the nation." [1]

[1] "Music and its Appreciation, or the Foundations of True Listening," by Stewart Macpherson. (London: Joseph Williams, Ltd.)

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II

THE AWAKENING OF AN INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION OF MUSIC; THE TEACHER'S PART

I HAVE already endeavored to show the value, in any sound scheme of musical education, of "appreciative" teaching, and to indicate how by its means the child's powers of observation may be rapidly and surely cultivated, and an intelligent response to the beauties of music awakened, even in the case of many who otherwise would be left to fall back for their musical impressions upon their own feeble struggles against heavy odds in the hours of piano-practice. Having regard to the ever-increasing technical difficulty and complexity of modern music, it should be obvious that it is only the comparatively few who will ever be able to cope with the more important instrumental works — at any rate, to play them effectively and well.

Dr. Lyttelton, the Headmaster of Eton, not long ago said most truly that "the main point to be emphasized at present is that ordinary musical education means training children to become good listeners." Precisely; and by making this thought the underlying motive of our teaching, we should be giving those same children a possession for life of the highest possible value, and be doing something at least for the improvement of the general standard of discernment and critical judgment, which at present is so often based upon a flimsy and worthless foundation. In a book on the education of a music-lover, published in America a year or two ago, its author, Mr. W. H. Dickinson, says:

"It does not seem to me to require argument to prove that the dissemination of good taste in art is an obligation upon college and school. If such argument is needed, there is no better summary than that of President Frederick Burk, of the San Francisco State Normal School. 'The world,' he says, 'uses vocations as a means

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of bread-winning, but the world also uses music, art, literature, the drama just as intensely, just as essentially, just as relevantly. Because the world uses religion, art, music, the drama, civic ideals, etc., these are as legitimate and important goals of education as bread-winning.'"

Need for the cultivation of the hearing sense

It must be patent to all of us, if we give the matter a moment's thought, that the faculty of hearing, of listening, so as really to make sense of what we hear, is one that requires steady and regular cultivation. Fondness for music — or rather, the experience of a certain sense of pleasure in hearing it — is not of necessity a proof of judgment or true appreciation, or even of the possession of the qualifications for true listening. It is a necessary preliminary condition; but no more. The intelligent apprehending of music requires much that goes far beyond this; it requires, as we have seen, the healthy development of the *hearing sense*, that sense which too often is allowed to lie dormant, untrained and undeveloped save in the case of the exceptional few, during the most sensitive years of life — that is to say, during the years of childhood.

It is true, I think, that the majority of the community regard the act of listening to music as something at once simple, obvious and familiar, and that the idea of any preparation for such listening comes home to them with a feeling even of strangeness and of novelty. But it should be clearly borne in mind that the sensitiveness of ear which is necessary for the true perception and realization of music must by no means be confused with the physical sensation which certain classes of composition produce with tolerable ease in the case of many even totally uncultured persons — uncultured, I mean, so far as the art of music is concerned. "It is not by any means an infallible proof of a really musical organization, or of a power of apprehending music, that we should find such a piece as the 'Ride of the Valkyries,' or Tschaikowski's '1812' overture setting up a certain kind of excitement in our nervous system, or that we should find ourselves instinctively beating time to the easily-recognized rhythm of some (perhaps perfectly artistic) dance-measure." [1]

[1] "Music and its Appreciation," page 2.

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If music is to become a pursuit or a recreation worthy of the serious attention of the more cultured minds among us, the art of listening must consist of much more than this; it must connote the power of following more or less completely the unfolding of the composer's plan, of observing and remembering his main ideas so that their subsequent development may become a source of delight to us, of taking note of the various shades of instrumental coloring, and — by no means least — it must include the ability to recognize the relationships of pitch sufficiently well so as to be able, in some measure at any rate, mentally to *see* both the melody and the harmony of the music to which we are giving our attention. Some may be tempted to object to much of what I have said — not, perhaps, in theory, but so far as it relates in practice to the bulk of the " body politic," that vast army constituting the staple of our concert-room audiences, and to reply to me that such persons can never be expected to do more than a fraction of what I have just been setting forth as necessary to true listening.

Requisites for true listening

That very few amateurs, and not all professional musicians, *are* able so to use their ears is hardly open to question; but that it is an impossibility, given certain preliminary conditions, I most emphatically deny, from experience gained at first hand over a fairly large area of operations.

A recent article in *The Times* on " The habit of listening," says:

> "There is no doubt whatever that many of us, simply through lack of the habit of listening, fail to hear more than a portion — sometimes an extremely small portion — of a composer's thoughts. . . . The natural man can only produce one note at a time of his natural instrument, his voice; and it is only very gradually that he attains to the power of distinguishing readily and clearly, the acoustically less prominent elements in simultaneous sounds. Much, no doubt, may be hoped from the newer educational methods which are little by little winning their way into schools; we are coming to see that appreciation is more valuable than performance."

If it is permissible to venture upon an analogy which, though not entirely exact at all points, is sufficiently so for the present purpose, one might say that the position of the average listener in the presence of music is in a very real sense that of the playgoer who witnesses a play in a foreign language

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with which he is either totally or in part unacquainted. Such an one does, it is true, gain a vague, general impression of the meaning and purport of the play from the gestures of the actors, and the varying tones of their voices; but of the expressiveness and the power of the language used by them he knows practically nothing. For him charm of phrase and appropriateness of diction bring no thrill of delight, and awaken no answering echo of admiration. So with music: "in the case of the many who throng our concert-rooms, we shall not be very wide of the mark in saying that what they hear reaches them in a somewhat similar way; the music comes to them purely as a physical sensation. A kind of general impression is produced, which presumably affords them a certain degree of pleasure; but it is quite incontestable that (just as in the case of the play in a foreign tongue) the pure unalloyed delight in the composer's *art*, arising from an appreciation of the actual language he uses, and of the development and interplay of his ideas, is something outside the experience of such hearers." [1]

True listening needs concentrated attention

For, after all, the listening to a serious musical work, *so as to make sense of it*, is a much more exacting matter than most people are disposed to think. We can stand before a picture or a statue as long as we like, and take in detail after detail, by which means our impression of it all becomes more definite. But music passes us by in a flash; it has to be conditioned by time; no sooner is one series of impressions partly imprinted on our mind than it has to make way for another, and that for another, and so on; and we often come away, particularly after a first hearing, with only a clouded idea of what it has all been about. If that is to some extent the case with even the trained ear, what must the result be upon the ear which is deaf to the very idioms of the language to which it is listening?

Now, supposing it is granted that much of what I have said is true, it may very reasonably be asked what one has to suggest as a means of improving this condition of things. Some words of a valued colleague at the Royal Academy of Music [2] will indicate the direction in which we should look for such improvement. He says:

[1] "Music and its Appreciation," page 2.
[2] Dr. H. W. Richards, in the *R.A.M. Club Magazine*, January, 1909.

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"It is self-evident that special attention should be directed to the child and its musical surroundings. We reap as a rule what we sow, and how can we hope to gather a rich harvest in any department of life where the seed-time has been overlooked? The early impressions that can be made on a child are so important that they claim more than the scanty notice which too often they receive."

The Child and its musical surroundings

After showing how so elementary a fact as this has been very long in being grasped by those who have dealt with musical education, and referring to the "horrible hours, often alone in a cold room, spent in practising five-finger exercises and scales, a dreary penance going by the name of 'doing our music,'" the same writer goes on to say:

"The gradual awakening of a child's intelligence, and early culture on right lines, will make music perhaps one of the chief pleasures of its existence, and soak into its very being. . . . Its mind must during these early years be awakened to the beauty of good music, so that it will, as it were, breathe the best air from its earliest days, and the foundation of its knowledge be so soundly planned and laid that no early method will need to be corrected and no lesson unlearned."

I would echo these words with my whole heart, and say again and again, "Begin with the child, who is the father of the man"; there lies the one chance, the one great hope of reaching all that some of us are ardently striving for. Thus, as I said before, we find ourselves face to face with the necessity of doing something towards getting our pupils, during their sensitive early years, into real and effective communion with *music* — music well played and sympathetically explained by a cultured and enthusiastic teacher.

Now as to the qualifications necessary for the teacher who seeks to undertake this most interesting and hopeful kind of work. First, it is clear that he must be a *musical enthusiast*, one who delights in music himself, and is desirous of passing on that delight and enthusiasm to others. Secondly, he must love his teaching, and not look upon it as a sort of penance, to be endured simply for the sake of its monetary reward. "The interest in the extension of musical appreciation," says Mr. Dickinson again, "once taking root as a conviction, becomes an enthusiasm. . . . Nowhere is it more beautifully manifested than among

Qualifications for "appreciative" teaching

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the noble group of obscure private teachers, who, at stated times, gather their little company of pupils and talk to them on the deeper things of their art. This is indeed a service that 'blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' . . . When music is felt by one of its votaries to be a source of unalloyed happiness and purification of spirit he is fired with something like a missionary zeal." Thirdly, the teacher must be a musician of good all-round knowledge — not merely a pianist, or singer, or violinist — but a *musician* in the best and widest sense of the term.

For it is clear that, in dealing with Musical Appreciation work, such subjects as Form, Harmony and Musical History must be more or less "at his fingers' ends," otherwise his chances of interesting his class will be small. Moreover, he must have a tolerably extensive acquaintance with the works of the great masters, and must know them well enough to quote aptly from time to time. The pieces he plays to his class *must be well played*, and most teachers of any ability at all should be able to play all the illustrations required for at least the more elementary stages, as these would not require excessive technical attainments. On the other hand, some little difficulty might very naturally be experienced by many teachers where a more advanced grade of work necessitated examples of compositions requiring a command of the key-board which they could not reach, with the very limited time at their disposal for their own practice. Where such happened to be the case, the teacher would — in my opinion — find a most helpful auxiliary in one of the many "Players" now available, upon which it is possible to play hundreds of the best-known classical and modern works. The control of such an instrument is acquired in a very short space of time by a really musical person, and I feel most strongly that, once the erroneous idea can be dissipated that it is a purely unsympathetic and expressionless piece of mechanism, its future as an educational factor will be assured, and its value in preparing the way for the appreciation of the performance of the great artist duly recognized and established.[1] In connection with the Musical Appreciation class, however,

[1] If the "Player" were so used, it would be well for the teacher to point out (by playing certain passages in the course of the music with his own fingers) what the mechanical instrument *cannot* do, so that the pupils might realize the difference when they go to concerts, and thus appreciate more clearly what the artist alone *can* do.

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the great matter is that — whether the teacher plays the illustrations himself or uses a "Player," or presses into his service some of his more talented pupils — such illustrations should be sufficiently well rendered as to interest the listeners and grip their attention, and, moreover, to serve as a good model for their own efforts at interpretation.

To sum up: the duty of the "Appreciation" teacher will be to seek to open the ears of his pupil "to behold wondrous things" as yet unheard by him, simply for the reason that those very ears have not been brought into condition to observe and to perceive. Do not some of us know what it is to have walked along the country-side with some artist friend, and to have felt positively ashamed that we did not see one-hundredth part of what he saw? — that touch of color on the roof of the old barn, the glint of the sunlight along the meadow by the stream? When, however, we are shown *how* to use our eyes, then it is that we begin to realize a little of what the painter sees, and are able to some extent to look at things from his point of view. So, surely, is it with music; one knows in one's own experience something of the joy that comes to the earnest student when one has, perchance, been able, by just a word, to draw his attention to some beautiful point which in all probability he would have missed, for the reason that his mind was not attuned — so to speak — to the task of observing such things.

The "Seeing eye" and the "Hearing ear"

How, then, is the teacher to help his pupil to meet the music in a spirit of alertness, so that the more subtle points of interest and beauty in the composer's work may not pass him by unheeded, unrecognized, unenjoyed? First and foremost, he must avoid the danger of "shooting too far over his pupil's head." In connection with this, I may say that certain schemes for children's concerts which I have seen sketched in journals dealing with education seem to me to be lamentably deficient in any sort of idea as to what can be grasped by the child-mind: in such schemes I have found elaborate works by Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, and others calmly proposed for the children's consumption — an error of judgment which a little practical acquaintance with the average child's powers of

The management of Appreciation classes — The Teacher's aims

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assimilation would have prevented. No! it is of the highest importance that the teacher should keep at first well within that child's existing range of experiences, making him gradually begin to stand on tiptoe — so to speak. By such means his intelligence is awakened naturally; and he is encouraged, instead of being disheartened and even repelled by being allowed to wallow in a sea of difficulties. The teacher's aim — it seems to me — must therefore be:

I. To awaken the sympathy and to cultivate the imagination of his pupil.

II. To help him to perceive the composer's art, to follow his plan, and to take an interest in the development and interplay of his ideas.

III. To help him to recognize the particular message of each of the great composers and of each of the great periods in art, by showing him something of the particular style and idiom exemplified by each.

In other words, he will seek to interest him along three main parallel lines, namely, the imaginative, the constructional and the historical. With young children the first of these will be followed, to the virtual exclusion of the other two, and much simple, imaginative music will be played to the pupil almost entirely without verbal comment on the technical side. The wise teacher will on no account force his emotional susceptibility by asking him to describe what he "feels"! — but will just let him drink in the music and think about it as he likes. At a somewhat more advanced age the pupil may — as I have already said elsewhere — well be called upon to look somewhat closer into the texture of the music, to gain some little grasp of its form, to recognize its period and style, to follow the uses to which the composer puts his chief themes — the tracing of the adventures of his principal characters, so to speak — and thus consciously to appreciate (*i.e.*, apprehend) some, at least, of the many interesting features of the music which a capable and resourceful teacher can so fruitfully bring to his notice. As a modern writer has said:

"There are periods and degrees of development in the minds of children to which correspond different manners of teaching . .. . as we make appeal to one or other of the growing

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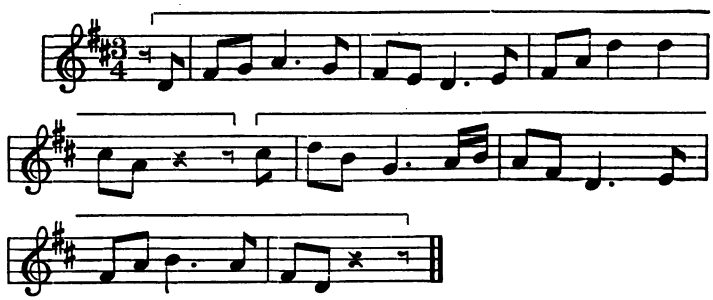
faculties. The first stage is imaginative, the second calls not only upon the imagination and memory, but upon the understanding, and the third, which is the beginning of a period of fruition, begins to exercise the judgment, and to give some ideas concerning principles of . . . criticism." [1]

In dealing with the " constructional " side, the element of form or design may be brought home to a child's mind very simply by the teacher playing him some such well-known tune as " Barbara Allen." **Simple ideas of construction**

Then, by a few words suited to his understanding, the first step could well be taken in showing him that pieces of music have a *shape;* that, for example, such things usually begin and end in the same key; that, as it were, after starting away from home on a walk or an excursion, we naturally make our " return journey," and at last land safely home again. By some such illustration as this, the intelligent teacher could readily and effectively appeal to the child-mind.

With a class of young pupils, it would be quite easy for the teacher to show how the two phrases of the tune are dependent one on the other, by stopping at the end of the first four bars and asking if it sounded finished, or not. The answer would almost certainly be in the negative, and from that the teacher could make clear to them two simple facts underlying all musical plan or structure, viz.:

I. The idea of some sort of *balance*, arrived at by one period in some way answering another, and

[1] Janet Erskine Stuart—"The Education of Catholic Girls." (Longmans and Co.)

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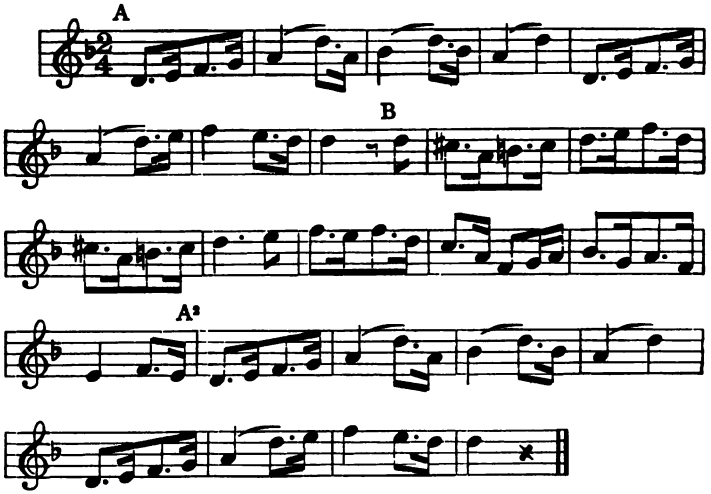
II. The idea of the importance of a *Tonic*, and the impossibility of a completely satisfactory conclusion anywhere else than upon that Tonic note, or Tonic chord.

The next step in the teaching of Form or Design in music might well be that of drawing the attention of the class to the fact that, although many little tunes like " Barbara Allen " are constructed on the plan of one phrase answering another in this very uniform way, others of greater length have a somewhat different shape, a shape which might well be described as that of the " Musical sandwich ":

"CHARLIE IS MY DARLING"

It will be noticed that the two foregoing illustrations are both national tunes, and I should like to say, in passing, that illustrations cannot be taken from a better source. They are nearly all beautiful, all are simple, and I know nothing that will have a more healthy effect on the child's mind — musically and otherwise — than an extensive acquaintance from earliest years with these products of the national spirit. If it were to do nothing more than give him a distaste — as it surely would — for the vapid music-hall " slang " (for music has slang as well as speech), most of us would agree, I think, that it would be at least worth while.

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Well, to go back to our tune. Here it would be a good thing for the teacher to try to make the pupils tell him if they found this tune and " Barbara Allen " alike, or if they found any difference between them. Then, if they noticed any difference, to make them say, as far as they could, where the difference lay. I can quite well believe that there would be not a few eager listeners who would have noticed that the opening phrase came back at the end. If so, he would have his opportunity, for at once he would begin to emphasize, as a thing of importance, this coming back to the first idea in a composition, and would play or sing other simple pieces having a similar design, such, *e.g.*, as " The Bluebells of Scotland " or " The Vicar of Bray."

A point that might be insisted upon in connection with this type of tune is that the sense of " home-coming " at the end is made much stronger:

I. **By the dwelling for a greater length of time in another district — which in itself sets up a desire for the " homeward journey " (here the teacher would play the first two phrases only of " Charlie is my Darling ");**

II. **By the emphatic restatement of the opening phrase, which gives a completely satisfactory sense of " being at home " (then he would finish the tune).**

Thus, in the simplest and most natural way, he would have been able to enforce one of the most important facts of music, viz., that of the ternary, or threefold, plan which underlies most of the music of the last one hundred and fifty years, *i.e.*, from the time of Haydn and Mozart onwards. But this enforcing would have been done without effort, without the cumbersome machinery of elaborate technical terms: merely by the familiar and easily understood figure of a *sandwich*, the first phrase and its repetition at the end being the two slices of bread, and the middle phrase the meat or the jam!

In dealing with these two tunes, I have been showing a little how their constructive aspects may be made clear to a class of quite young children, and, of course, it is upon this important side of the question that they will need the most help. But in directing their attention to such things, a

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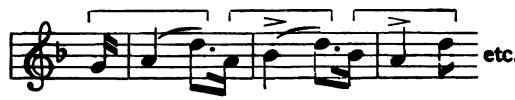
matter that on no account must be omitted is the cultivation of a perception of the *character* of the music on the part of the pupils, who should be asked to give their own ideas on the subject. In all probability, most of the members of the class would have noticed that "Barbara Allen" is quiet and a little pathetic, whereas "Charlie is my Darling" is bold and even martial. Here, again — so intimately associated are the two factors of construction and expression — it would interest the class to show them how this very difference of expression depends upon the smooth and almost monotonous flow of the notes in "Barbara Allen," as contrasted with the springing, jumping figure that goes through the whole of "Charlie is my Darling" with such vigorous, pulsating life and energy.

Character in music

One might also illustrate how this energy is heightened by the emphasis derived from the insistent repetition of little fragments such as:

and so on — according to the intelligence of the class and (what is very important) the intelligence and ability of the *teacher!*

Closely connected with this perception of the character of the music comes the exercise of the listener's imagination. And here it is most essential for the teacher to bear in mind the need of stimulating this side of the pupil's nature wisely and without any forcing. In endeavoring to do this, it would, of course, be legitimate to make use of the more pictorial or illustrative type of music — that which has a more or less definite "program," such as the overture to Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," and some of the smaller pieces of Schumann, Grieg, Macdowell and others. Care must be taken, it need hardly be said, in introducing such pieces to the pupil's notice, that he does not run away with the foolish idea that all music "means something." The lady who said that she always "saw cathedrals in listening to Beethoven, and moonlight and vague shadows when she heard Debussy" of course had a right to her own feelings;

Awakening of the imagination

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but for the teacher to suggest or hint at such perfectly irrelevant ideas would, it almost goes without saying, be both foolish and pernicious. It is, however, none the less true that in certain cases the composer himself seeks to direct the thoughts of the listener into some specific channel, and an endeavor on the part of the teacher to help the pupil to come into closer relation with the composer's train of thought, by the use of poetic imagery, analogies with Nature, and other similar means, seems to me not only permissible but wise, and likely to be productive of increased interest and corresponding progress on the pupil's part.

Following the development of the Composer's thoughts

Among the essentials for intelligent listening, none is more important than the power to follow — at any rate to some extent — the development of the composer's themes or ideas. In this, in large measure, lies the secret of " making sense " of any work of more than very modest proportions and very limited scope. We have to remember that music is not a simple but a *complex* art, and " the listener must hold in his mind the thought of organized development as he follows a performance phrase by phrase." He must " hear each phrase as a preparation for that which is to come; his mind [must be] alert, as if about to spring ahead of the actual tones and anticipate their direction, or at least . . . to connect each passage with what he has already heard and construct in his mind more or less extensive divisions of the work as he goes along." [1] In many of the Sonatas and Symphonies of Beethoven, for example, there are movements in which the whole fabric is developed from one or two comparatively insignificant musical ideas which in very truth hold the life of the movement within them, just as the seed contains all the potentialities of growth and development which we associate with the plant or the tree.

It is not too much to say that it is to the extent that we keep firm hold on our grasp of these germ-ideas in our listening that we gain a successful conception of the whole movement, one in which we are aware of the master-purpose dominating it throughout. Thus, and thus only, can we be truly in that position of " intelligent expectation " to which allusion has been made. Moreover, the growing ability thus to follow the composer's train of thought will reveal to

[1] W. H. Dickinson — "The Education of a Music-lover."

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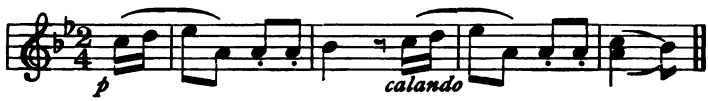
us more and more of his artistic individuality, and (as one has said elsewhere) [1] of that "power which is not shared by the painter or sculptor, and which the artist in words possesses only in a far less notable degree than does the musician — the power of making the same original thought or idea express the most varied emotions, as it were in the twinkling of an eye. Music, in this respect, would seem to get nearest to life of all the arts, for in the rapidity and sureness with which one idea may be made to pass instantaneously 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe' we have something closely akin to the ever-changing expression of the human countenance, which is, of course, in a marked sense the index of the mind and soul. It need hardly be said that in the representative arts of painting or sculpture the delineation of shifting emotions in this way is manifestly impossible, for the expression once painted or chiselled must of necessity remain exactly as it was first conceived and executed."

Even in the case of the young pupil, I am as sure as I can be of anything that if, instead of the teacher giving him such a piece as Beethoven's little *G*-minor Sonata (Op. 49, No. 1), with the mere request to "go and learn it," he were himself to interest that pupil in it first — not so much from the point of view of execution, as from the standpoint of musical art — the result in that pupil's mind ever afterwards would be very different from what it usually is.[2] Most teachers know something of the callous way in which such incidents as that of the delicious little "farewell" at the end of the first part of the "Andante" (just before the first double-bar), are

treated by the average piano-pupil whose "ears have not been opened to hear." If the teacher were to *play the piece to him*, and show how this little phrase is — as it were — just Beethoven's "backward look" at the second theme of

[1] "Aural Culture based upon Musical Appreciation" (Stewart Macpherson and Ernest Read), Part II., pages 175–6.

[2] I have seen a class of young children spell-bound under such an experience.

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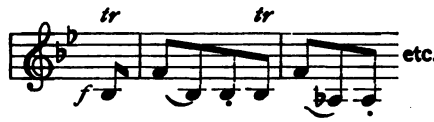
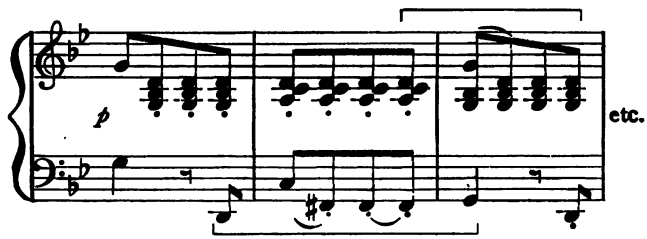
the movement, as if he were loth to lose its tender fragrance, the whole matter would, at any rate, be put on a different level, and there would be some chance of its being looked at from a different view-point. It is not unlikely, too, that in such an act on the teacher's part, there might be just the touch that was needed to awaken that sympathetic mental attitude to which reference has already been made.

In passing, one might say that the whole of that long-suffering movement of Beethoven's little Sonata is full of delightful points of thematic development; particularly interesting is the opening of its second part:

where the same 2nd subject tune is shown in a mood of strenuous determination (sadly unrealized by the general run of pupils, bent on the unequal contest between the " shakes " and their own recalcitrant fingers!), and so also is the twilight calm of the Coda, where the theme dies away in charming duet-fashion, thus:



The recognition of such incidents as these, and the following of the composer as he brings out of his treasure-house these jewels of his art, lie at the root of that fuller enjoyment and appreciation of the masterpieces of such symphonists as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, and of the great dramatic composer of the 19th century, Wagner. The power thus to follow indeed adds that " very much more " of which the writer of the *Times* article spoke when he said: " Whatever satisfaction may be derived from music by those to whom it is merely a thing of the nerves, or, at least, of

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the surface emotions, the [true] listener has all that, and very much more." In conclusion: of the immense value of the "appreciative" study of music I am absolutely convinced — as convinced as I am of the sterility of much of the so-called musical education with which we are all familiar. Under the influence of the kind of teaching I have been advocating, and in the atmosphere of a sympathetic relation to music which is thereby possible, the interest even of those whom we are pleased to call *unmusical* pupils is stimulated almost beyond belief, and the result is, in countless instances, a new outlook upon the art itself, and a new joy in their own lives.

The value of "appreciative" teaching

I am not talking at random or as an unpractical visionary; I speak that which I do know. The testimony of those teachers who have pursued, and are pursuing, this most hopeful and inspiring work, either in school or out of it, is unanimous; the "Appreciation class" over and over again has come to be the most eagerly looked-for event of the week's work, and the experience of the teachers themselves has invariably pointed in the same direction, namely, to quickened interest and real musical growth.

A striking instance of this came recently under my notice. Before the annual concert at one of our great public schools, at which a professional orchestra was to perform, the principal music-master offered to meet any boys who liked to come to him week by week during the term, and to play for them the various works that were to form the program of the concert. The first week about thirty somewhat shy boys put in an appearance; he played to them, made them sing (or whistle, if they could not sing) the chief themes until they were thoroughly familiar with them, discussed the form and the various points of interest in the course of the music, and so forth. The result was a splendid success; the little group of boys was enthusiastic, and after that first meeting the master had the satisfaction of welcoming as many as two hundred boys at his weekly class, boys who voluntarily gave up other occupations in order to hear the music and his talk about it.

A Public School experiment

What a different attitude will be assumed towards music by those boys in future from that which so often obtains amongst

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the youth of our schools! Something of the dignity and the worthiness of the musical art will have entered, perhaps unconsciously, into their minds, and instead of "music" being associated merely with the idea of somewhat dismal piano-practice, shirked — and not unnaturally shirked — because taken out of play-time, it will connote the idea of the ampler and nobler atmosphere of a Beethoven symphony, perchance, into which they have been enabled to enter by the wise and far-seeing action of their master, who surely built wisely and well, upon firm foundations.

The art needs better listeners; the composer, the performer, longs for the "gracious sympathy of the understanding" in his hearers; is it not upon some such lines as those I have outlined in these articles that the consummation of these hopes may ultimately be found?

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PART THREE

THE MUSIC-TEACHER: HIS AIMS AND IDEALS[1]

> "What one ought to aim at is not the establishment of personal influence . . . but to share such good things as one possesses, to assist rather than to sway."
>
> A. C. BENSON

I

It is not too much to say that one of the most important questions that press upon the music-student, at least at some period of his career, is that of the consideration — the serious consideration — of all that is involved in the expression, so familiar to our ears, but often so imperfectly understood — the Music-teacher. It is more than likely that the majority of those who study the art of music seriously make some acquaintance with the duties of the teacher's office during the years that succeed their studentship, and it is well, it is most vitally necessary, that we should reflect very earnestly upon what that office involves in the way of responsiblity and of ideals.

Now, it seems to me that the first thing it is needful to impress upon our young musicians is that teaching is an art in itself, as worthy in its way as the art of the executant or the composer, and that it is an indignity to its honor for it ever to be regarded as a *pis aller*, or as a trade to be followed and endured merely because they find it difficult or impossible to earn a livelihood as public performers or as composers. They must see that the teacher's career is not for the broken-down performer — there is no use for him there; they must realize that they cannot enter the teacher's calling, any more than the holy estate of matrimony, "lightly or unadvisedly," but must be deeply sensible of the responsibility attaching to their position, and of the untold influence

[1] The substance of some addresses to music-students, delivered during the years 1914 and 1915.

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they may be able to exercise, either for good or for ill, upon those who come into close personal contact with them.

William James, the American psychologist, writing a few years back, was able to say:

"In the general activity and uprising of ideal interests which everyone with an eye for fact can discern all about us in American life, there is perhaps no more promising feature than the fermentation which for a dozen years or more has been going on among the teachers. In whatever sphere of education their functions lie, there is to be seen among them a really inspiring amount of searching of heart about the highest concerns of their profession. . . . The teachers of this country, one may say, have its future in their hands. The earnestness which they at present show in striving to enlighten and strengthen themselves is an index of the nation's probabilities of advance in all ideal directions." [1]

An awakening amongst Teachers

Well, it appears to me that a similar fermentation has for some time past been observable amongst the teachers in our own land, and that this stir and movement has communicated itself in large measure to those who are dealing with the more special form of teaching connected with our own art of music. I would, therefore, urge the younger members of our profession, and particularly the students nearing the completion of their ordinary musical training, to recognize the absolute need for careful study of the newer conditions that are arising all around us.

Great changes are often brought about by other processes than those involving the sudden overthrow of existing things; there is a leaven which works almost unobserved by the multitude, but which nevertheless ends by "leavening the whole lump," and before we are aware of it the "old order" has changed, and those who trusted to the comforting but deluding thought that "what has been will be," awaken to the disconcerting realization of a movement and an advance in which they have had neither part nor lot, and in the midst of which they find themselves mystified, nonplussed and outclassed. One of these bloodless revolutions is actually in process of being carried out at the present time, and some among us seem to know little about it yet. Certain questions are being put by those who think — questions asked both of themselves and of those around them. We, as

[1] "Talks to Teachers." — William James.

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teachers of the art of music, cannot hold ourselves aloof and say, "These things are not for me; I may go on my way without troubling my brain about such inconvenient and disturbing matters." I say they *are* for us, everyone of us; the student, the professor, the executant, the composer, for we all hang together here, and unless we are untrue to ourselves and to our art, we must — each in our own respective sphere and degree — take cognizance of the thoughts and the doubts that arise in the minds of those who are responsible for the education of the young in our midst.

For upon the character of the musical training of the *average material* to be found amongst us depends in the long run the future of music in this country. The composer, the executant — no less than the teacher — is concerned, as I have just said, with all this, for neither can do any "mighty work" where there is "unbelief," that is, where he cannot work in an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding. Therefore, it seems to me, it is of the first importance that those whose duty it will be to deal with this average material — the school-girls and school-boys — shall be aware of their great responsibility, and see where and how they may be of untold assistance in the preparing of the soil for the harvest we all would fain think is to be reaped in the time to come.

The Teacher and average material

Suppose, then, that any one of you students were to be setting out, after a happy and enthusiastic period of study and intercourse within the walls of some great musical institution, to take up your life-work as a teacher. Let me say that *that* will be the moment when you will need all the hope and all the true kind of ambition that you can summon to your aid. For it is quite likely that after the glow and color of your student-days — when you find yourself left to yourself — a certain flatness and dulness may creep over your outlook, and a none too welcome reaction set in which may need all your efforts to combat.

Then is the time to look up, to set your house in order — so to speak — and to gain some sort of idea as to what you are going to aim at, what ideals you are going to follow.

First, then, it is necessary to have some clear notion of what your duties are to be as a teacher. What is to be your

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aim? You will answer, perhaps, "To teach my pupil to play or sing." Yes, true; but there is something more than that you have to do, and that is, to teach your pupil *music*, and to help him to get into touch with this wonderful and beautiful thing which we love ourselves and which, if we are sincere and earnest, we shall want to make him love, too. Now, I fear that this thought has not always been sufficiently present in the minds of some teachers, and if we think of many of those so-called "music-lessons" that are given all over the country day by day, I fancy we shall not be able to assert with a vast degree of confidence that our children's lessons and practice have invariably yielded them that keen interest and joy which should be, not the exception, but the rule, if they are to be of any value at all.

What should be the Teacher's aims?

I remember a friend of mine telling me that he was once called upon to hear a girl play, and when she entered the room with a bundle of pieces under her arm he, thinking to put her at her ease, said, "Come along, now, what will you play first to me? Which of all these things do you like the best?" The answer was at the moment somewhat of a shock: "I hate the lot!" Surely there was something wrong here; the fault did not lie with the music, for it was entirely good. Did it lie with the girl herself, or had it anything to do with the manner in which the whole subject had, up to that moment, been presented to her? It is an interesting point.

The first thing, then, for the would-be teacher to realize very clearly is what he is going to set out to do. Why is he going to be a music-teacher? Why should he not be anything else just as well?

Does he really believe in his work? Does he see why his pupil should learn music, and does he connect this learning of music with the wider aspect of the matter represented by the education of the pupil *as a whole* — in other words the relation of music to the various other parts of that education?

These are matters which cannot be put on one side as of no particular moment; they are vital if any advance is to be made, or any real and valuable results are to be achieved. It is necessary to remember that most of you, in all probability, will have to deal, not with professed

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music-students, but with girls and boys with whom music is one activity among many, and your aim must clearly be to make its study something of real value in their mental development.

The young Teacher and "Beginners"

It used to be a common experience to hear the music-student, about to embark upon his or her teaching career, declare with an amusing assumption of superiority, "Oh! I shall never take beginners!" And perhaps this kind of thing is not altogether extinct even to-day. I always say to those whom I can in any way advise that the one thing they should pray for is that they *may* have beginners! Far from its being a position of inferiority to deal with the child, it is to my mind not only the most hopeful phase of the teacher's work, but it needs a special training of the most thorough and searching kind.

Suppose, then, that a child were to come to you for his first lesson, what should be your own course of action, and what should be the result upon the pupil of having come? Of course, your plan of campaign would have to vary according to the previous musical experiences, if any, of the child himself; therefore, it would be your duty to find out what those experiences had been, in order that you might build upon them as far as it was possible so to do. In such a case as this we have to remember that it is quite likely that you would be giving him his first really serious impressions of music; and first impressions are peculiarly vivid and lasting. In dealing with the young child, the great point is to win his sympathy and his coöperation. You have to find an entrance into his mind, and to make him understand that what you are going to do together is something that is *alive*, real, fundamental — something in which he will be able to feel there is a living spirit at work. The faculty of wonder is a very real thing in a small child, and upon that it is wise to base a good deal. His mental grasp is naturally small, his power of expressing himself in words almost non-existent so far as matters intellectual are concerned, his interest in printed signs, such as words or notes, of the smallest. And yet, too often it has been the custom to seat the child at the piano face to face with a book containing certain cabalistic and (to him) meaningless signs, and to inform him

First impressions of Music

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that one of them is called a whole note, another a half-note and so on — facts which do not interest him in the least, and to which he remains stolidly indifferent.

Indeed, why *should* they interest him? In themselves they are, of course, not musical ideas at all; they are merely signs — machinery, so to speak — which he is frequently called upon to master before any vision of *music* reaches him at all.[1] Is it any wonder that such an introduction to our beautiful art should cause many a small person to fall by the way, and to become cynical where music and all its works are concerned?

The training of the ear

Happily, it is increasingly being realized that the foundation upon which all hope of real musical progress must be built is the training of the ear. It is said, and said truly, that every piano-lesson well given must in itself be an ear-training lesson, but that is not enough. Ear-training in its more comprehensive sense is far too large a subject to be dismissed in that somewhat vague and abstract way; it must strike at the root of much that is independent of connection with any particular instrument, and indeed should begin long before there is any thought of definite instrumental teaching whatever. It must connote the gradual sensitizing of the whole being of the child in the direction of music through the development of his feeling for time and rhythm and the relations of pitch, the awakening of his imagination, and the stimulating of his powers of observation. By such means he will, when he comes to the point of learning an instrument, have some chance of doing so with ear and mind to some extent prepared to cope with the difficulties he will have to encounter, instead of meeting a solid and forbidding phalanx of physical and mental complications before which he retires baffled and discouraged.

The Child's "motor-activity"

In the earliest stages of the child's musical work, it seems to me that the very fact of his own "motor-activity" may become a valuable adjunct in the task of drawing out his powers of self-expression. He longs, as you know, to be on the move (you often wish he would not, perhaps, but he *does*); why not take advantage, therefore, of this natural tendency, and use it for your own purposes? We hear

[1] This process is called "teaching him his notes!"

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much talk in these days about bodily Rhythmic movements in connection with the teaching and learning of music. How far are they in accordance with Nature's laws? How far are they of value in laying a foundation for that sensitiveness to order and rhythm and that disciplined expression which is the very life and soul of all musical creation and execution? The name of M. Jacques-Dalcroze will doubtless come to the minds of many in the endeavor to answer these questions. Without its being necessary to commit oneself to an indorsement of the whole, or anything like the whole, of his system, it should, I think, be evident that the *root-principle* of much that he advocates is absolutely sound, for it just amounts to this, that the young child's natural means of expression is through bodily movement.[1] Not only are the ideas of pulse, time, the progressive nature of rhythm and the principles of form or shape easily expressed by bodily movement, but, what is even more important, in the earliest stages, the child's perception of the character of a great deal of simple music may be stimulated, and his listening powers developed enormously, by the aid of the unrestrained running, skipping, marching, or whatever it may be, which is the result of his own initiative, and is suggested to his small mind by the music itself, being therefore his own response to its appeal.[2] I cannot enlarge here upon this most important aspect of the whole matter; I can only say that experience has confirmed the extraordinary results claimed from work in this direction (especially in class), as a preliminary to the more severe call upon the pupil's mental powers later on, as he passes out of early childhood and reaches a stage at which his thinking and reasoning powers have developed sufficiently to respond to the demands made upon them by the teacher, without recourse to such physical aids.

"Free" bodily movements

When the more serious business of his aural training begins, it is in most cases possible to correlate such aural

[1] I say advisedly, "the young child's," as it should be obvious that this does not hold good in the case of the adult or the adolescent.

[2] The development of the child's own initiative in this way was, as far as my own knowledge serves me, first carried out systematically at the Streatham Hill High School under the direction of Miss Marie Salt, where it still forms an important element of the musical work during the Kindergarten stage.

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training with the study of an instrument. But it should be remembered that, unless the development of the pupil's ear and mind is, all along the line, in advance of his mere powers of finger-execution, his progress musically will be retarded and checked beyond belief, and Nemesis will follow.

Ear and mind first; fingers next

It is evident that much of the pupil's aural training can be most effectively carried out in class, where the stimulus of numbers, and the interest aroused by seeing and hearing the efforts of others, are factors of extreme importance and value. Herein lies one very strong argument in favor of the child's musical studies being carried on *in school* (that is, of course, wherever the conditions are satisfactory), for there it is possible for him to reap the immense advantages of the ear-training and choral classes, which are playing every day a more and more notable part in the musical education of our boys and girls, and are being conducted with ever growing efficiency and success. And I would urge upon all music-students the extreme importance of gaining practical knowledge of the methods of dealing with such classes, for this knowledge is in many cases now, and will be so increasingly in the immediate future, a *sine quâ non* for the teacher who aspires to a post in one of our better-equipped schools, where those responsible for the education of our children are recognizing, in ever larger measure, the value of such work in their mental development, and are welcoming the coöperation of the musician in their task in a spirit of ever greater sympathy and regard.

The Teacher and class-work

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II

THE advice once given by Samuel Butler, not to learn to do, but to learn by doing, has a very distinct bearing in connection with the drawing out of the musical powers of the young pupil. There is one side of the general teaching of music which, until recently, has had little or no attention paid to it, but which is of the highest consequence in the artistic growth of the child — I mean the cultivation of his own creative faculty. William James, from whose "Talks to Teachers" I have already quoted, says again:

"During the [early] years of childhood the mind is most interested in the sensible properties of material things. *Constructiveness* is the instinct most active; and by the incessant hammering and sawing, and dressing and undressing dolls, putting of things together and taking them apart, the child not only trains the muscles to co-ordinate action, but accumulates a store of . . . conceptions which are the basis of his knowledge of the material world through life. . . . One of the best fruits of the 'child-study' movement has been to re-instate [constructive] activities to their proper place in a sound system of education. *Feed* the growing human being, feed him with the sort of experience for which from year to year he shows a natural craving, and he will develop in adult life a sounder sort of mental tissue, even though he may seem to be 'wasting' a great deal of his growing time in the eyes of those for whom the only channels of learning are books and verbally communicated *information*."

William James

With regard to literature and music, most children are capable of a certain amount of original invention, and it will be found that many will, if the experiment be made, soon be able to construct little tunes for themselves. "In such work, which need not absorb much time or labor, children take the keenest interest, as they find in it a fresh means of self-expression. Even the Kindergarten child who, in response to his teacher's singing of (it may be) a simple fragment of tune, such as the following:

The Child's creative faculty

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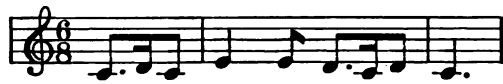
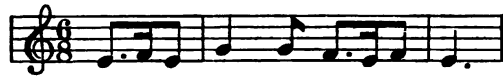

pipes in his tiny voice — without any thought of the technicalities of notation, of which at that particular stage he would know nothing — another fragment something like this:

has taken the first step along the desired path, and experiences a sense of real delight in the consciousness that he really has 'made something' himself. At the same time he has, without effort or undue labor, learned an important fact connected with the musical 'phrase' which will stand him in good stead later on when the more technical part of his work begins. The object of such constructive work is . . . to apply to music-study the sane ideas now gaining ground with reference to the training of the pupil's powers of observation and imagination by means of drawing, where the ability to *originate*, however feebly, is beginning to be recognized as lying at the root of all real and lasting progress in those aspects of mental development which the use of pencil or brush is supposed effectively to encourage and to stimulate." [1]

The headmistress of one of our most important London schools said in a recent address on "Music in School-life":

The awakening of original thought by means of music

"Of all the various types of pupils that pass through our hands, hardly any is so dreaded by a keen teacher as the dull, unresponsive boys or girls who never brighten into interest, who never produce an independent idea. We all long for pupils who show some spark of originality or imagination, and sometimes we know not by what means to strike that spark. Might not music furnish that means? A dull class in my own school was asked the other day to write a melody to 'Hush-a-bye, baby.' No hints of any kind were given, but every child was pledged to make an attempt. All brought their melody, and all had chosen $\frac{6}{8}$ time, the reason given being that you could rock better to it. One child brought a charming melody written in the minor mode, and when asked why she chose the minor rather than the major, said 'Oh, because

[1] "Aural Culture based upon Musical Appreciation."—Stewart Macpherson and Ernest Read.

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it is so sad and dreamy — the major is bright and jolly and would wake the baby up!' These may be small things in themselves, but I think they show that music taught in this way does stimulate imagination and originality." . . . "I speak from personal experience in the literature classes, which I teach myself, when I say that I have noticed in girls who have had this form of aural training a keener perception of the beauty of great poetry, a quicker response to its melody, its rhythm, its cadences, a dawning discrimination between good and bad in literary style — in short, a greater sensitiveness to beauty of sound and form. You will smile, perhaps, when I tell you that we encourage our children to write words to the melodies they compose, or to write words and set them to music; yet it is curious to notice how soon they become critical of their own and each other's productions, and how, by degrees, there emerges a perception, limited, of course, by their youth and inexperience, yet genuine so far as it goes, of the *word*-music of literature."

Music and Literature

I think it will be generally conceded that the bane of much teaching has been, and often still is, that it has tended to check initiative, and this fact has at times shown itself most fatally in the case of music. Let me urge those who teach, or intend to teach, to take full advantage of the child's native desire to "do something off his own bat"; I can assure them that they will be surprised at the results.

One very valuable outcome of even the most elementary creative work is the rapid growth of the feeling for shape and balance, the absence of which is directly responsible for the greater part of the bad "phrasing" we are all acquainted with in the instrumental efforts of so many pupils. This faulty "phrasing" is mainly due to an obvious aural defect; the idea of shape and balance to which I have just referred is not, to any effective extent, familiar to their ears. By encouraging them to sing little answers to given phrases sung or played by the teacher, they are helped to *feel* and to hear the need for "phrase-shape" in a very marked way, and thus far there is more chance of their being prepared for such a thing when they come to interpret other people's music at the keyboard or by any other means.

The feeling for "phrase"

Closely related to this creative work, and to the general training of the ear, comes the question of the teaching of Harmony. It may be asked, "How can you expect the average pupil of school age to learn Harmony? Where is

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the time for it? And if the time can be got, of what practical use is it to him? How and where does it help him in his other work?" These are pertinent questions, and it is important that they should be faced. First of all it is necessary to disabuse our minds of one or two ideas which tend to obscure the real issue. These are (*a*) that the object of learning Harmony is to enable the pupil to "explain" every combination he meets with, according to some *theory;* (*b*) that the study is merely a sort of mental discipline which in some vague way imparts what is called "musicianship" (a term which is not very accurately defined by those who use it). That it does, when rightly pursued, contribute vitally to the growth of musicianship is true, but only under certain very clear conditions. Simply to set the pupil to pile up chords on paper, and to work exercises in mere part-writing, the sound of which *he does not hear* is in the nature of things foolish, and may lead to great waste of time. But, surely, it is of the first importance that we should train all our pupils to think in terms of Harmony as well as of melody, so that, whether they are merely listening to other people's performances, or are playing themselves, their minds may be brought into condition for hearing what the composer has written — to think, for example, occasionally of the *bass!* — by means of a right habit of mind formed in their early years. It should be axiomatic that the teaching and learning of Harmony should have the closest possible association with matters such as these; it should aim at making the pupil listen ever more keenly to his music, at rendering his whole being sensitive to the more intimate and delicate beauties of it all by that very means, and at training him to an appreciation of those very matters in the discerning of which the more educated ear of the musician differs from the blunter sensibilities of the "man in the street."

The "Average Pupil" and Harmony

I need hardly say, then, that such Harmony-study, as I am referring to, must be simply another and more advanced form of the aural training which we have been thinking of throughout our consideration of the pupil's early musical upbringing. If it is not that, it is little better than useless; if it *is* that, its importance can hardly be over-estimated. A paragraph in the recent Memorandum on Music in

Harmony-study must be Aural training

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Secondary Schools, issued in 1914 by the Board of Education, puts the matter very well. It runs:

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the method of teaching Harmony, whereby pupils are taught to resolve chords on paper by eye, quite regardless of the fact that ninety-nine per cent. of them do not realize the sound of the chords they are writing, is musically valueless. . . . In no other language than that of music would it be tolerated that the theoretical rules of grammar and syntax should be so completely separated from the actual literature from which they are derived, that the pupil should never have perceived that there was any relation whatever between them. Yet it is a common thing to find 'advanced' Harmony pupils unable to pick out, in a piece of music they are playing, the key transitions, a Dominant-seventh, a cadence or a suspension — a state of ignorance which would only be paralleled by a sixth-form pupil, familiar with all the rules of grammar and analysis, who could stare blankly at a page of prose, totally unable to pick out of any sentence the subject, the verb, and the object."

The Piano-teacher and Harmony

Now, a point to be carefully observed and pondered over is that all these matters of which we are speaking concern the piano-teacher just as much as they concern the actual teacher of Harmony as a separate subject. Even in the case of the child learning his little piano pieces, it should be possible to stimulate the harmonic sense and arouse his interest in the texture of the music, by encouraging him to play cadences and other simple chord progressions for himself, and to transpose them into other keys, the next step being the endeavor on his part to harmonize little fragments of tune *at the keyboard*, using at first merely the simple primary chords of the key. By such means a habit of *harmonic listening* may be developed; moreover, the pupil will experience a feeling of pleasure at having done something for himself that "isn't in the book." Of course, where a school possesses an Aural training class — and no school should be without one — this kind of work would follow the more elementary melodic work in natural sequence; it would serve the purpose of helping the pupil to grasp with his ear, and then to use for himself, the more usual and natural idioms of the language he is studying — the "bread and butter" of his music, so to speak — just as a child first learns to make known his needs and his feelings in monosyllables, and, in his early attempts to read and write, makes

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use of the phrases and expressions which are in general currency around him.

The Harmony-teacher and so-called "Modern Harmony"

And while we are on the subject of the teaching of Harmony, it would hardly be honest to omit all reference to the difficulties (perhaps more apparent than real) of many young teachers in face of the curious and often perplexing experiments of the so-called "Modernists." One is conscious of an attitude of bewilderment on the part of some; the hearts of the timid are failing them for fear, and the thought — unexpressed, perhaps, in words, but none the less insistent — in many a mind to-day is, "Of what use is it for me to teach my pupils Harmony when, seemingly, everything I teach them is abrogated and ignored in so many of the compositions with which they make acquaintance? Are they to believe me and the text-books I use, or are they to pin their faith to the direct negation of all that I have been trying to instil into their minds?"

Of course, at some future time it may conceivably be necessary to revise our whole conception of the theoretical and practical bases of our musical system, in order to conform to new revelations of the possibilities of the composer's art. Some would say that this is necessary *now*, and that it is impossible to square the doings of the French modernists, of Scriabine and of Schönberg, with the principles of art inherent in the compositions of those whom the world recognizes as the great and acknowledged masters. That this is impossible may be true, or it may not, according to your point of view; but what I should like emphatically to say is that the time for casting the whole of our existing machinery into the "scrap-heap" is not yet. For one very simple reason; the experiments of such writers as I have just named, beautiful as some may be, the reverse of beautiful as others undoubtedly are, are still only *experiments;* to declare that there is anything yet to be seen that we can set up as providing the basis for a new artistic system with qualities of permanence would be, to say the least, an assumption whose temerity would be only equalled by its foolishness.

Experimental nature of much "Modernist" Art

So, long, then, as our teaching is in touch with that which, though already recognized as established, is still a living

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language, so long as it trains the learner's ear to appreciate and understand the world's acknowledged masterpieces, and gives him some sort of standard from which to appraise the doings of newer men, it serves its chief purpose. The objection, sometimes seriously put forward, that the Harmony professor and the Harmony book check the full-tide of original thought on the part of those budding geniuses by whose existence some people seem so obsessed, is surely one that argues an imperfect realization of the office and functions of both. The student must learn the elements of his trade; he must know how to use his tools and the means by which he may avoid cutting himself therewith. As soon as he has done these things the wise teacher leaves him largely to himself, and tells him to read and absorb all the music — of all ages and countries — that he can lay his hands on. Rest assured that, if he has originality in him, it "will out," and the elementary knowledge of the rules of his art, and the degree of discipline to which he has submitted, will no more check the development of his individuality than learning to draw straight lines will cramp or hinder the artistic flights of the most ardent "impressionist" painter.

Since it is an axiom of teaching to proceed from the simple to the more complex, it holds good, as I have already said, that the earlier stages of the pupil's Harmony work must be concerned with making acquaintance with the more usual idioms, things which are universal in their use; and not with those which are the experimental battle ground of special types of writers.

Thus the time has not come when he can dispense with learning about the progression of common chords and the use of the Dominant-seventh; and, if we value the importance of his perceiving those more "delicate impressions and distinctions" of which I have already spoken, it will still be necessary to place a certain curb upon his propensity — due to original sin, no doubt — to write consecutive fifths and octaves, even although they are common enough to-day to make one think that the next genius will be he who has the daring to "keep the rules!" Of course, composers for generations past have written consecutive fifths when they wanted them, and the varying degree of success of such proceedings has depended

"Rules"

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upon the measure with which their result, æsthetically, has justified the means. But, as Mr. F. Corder aptly says:

> "The rule against consecutive fifths, like all others, is only a convenient generalization, and the argument is simply absurd that because any generalization we make is sometimes broken, therefore it would be better to have no rules at all. In the same way, one might say that because English grammar has numerous exceptions, therefore grammar is useless."

If the teacher shows his pupil that all such "rules" *are* merely "convenient generalizations," and not items in a musical Decalogue, everything falls into place, and they will be seen to be, not hindrances, but merely friendly guide-posts to help him along an untrodden path, until such time as his ear and artistic sense of fitness shall enable him to use his own judgment with security.

But the pursuance of this topic further would lead me into a discussion of the more thorough and formal study of Harmony necessary for the specialized student, and upon this (seeing that we are dealing solely with the musical education of the *child*) I cannot enlarge here and now.

Every effort should be made to connect the young pupil's Harmony work with his attempts at melodic invention. This can be done with comparative ease; even if he gets no further than being able to play and write the cadences to the little tunes he has imagined, the connection will have been set up, and, in all probability, the matter will not end there, but lead to something more extensive and important in the time to come. It may be urged that, under the ordinary conditions prevailing in the case of school-pupils, this kind of inventive work is not possible; the answer to this is that such work is now being carried out successfully in many schools, to my own personal knowledge, and I have already quoted the opinions of one headmistress on the subject. The qualification must, of course, be made that, in the majority of cases, such work, of necessity, must be of a very simple character; and above all things it should be borne in mind that the whole aim — as I have already said — is not to produce a race of *composers*, but simply to awaken and render more alert the musical perception of the pupil, by making use of that natural,

The connecting of Harmony with the Pupil's creative efforts

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inherent desire to "make something," which is the prerogative of every healthy and ordinarily intelligent child.[1]

[1] When the above remarks upon the cultivation of the creative faculty in the child were first delivered in lecture-form, they were most ably and effectively illustrated by a number of boys and girls from the Royal Normal College for the Blind, by permission of the Principal, Mr. Guy M. Campbell, F.R.G.S. The various items of the program are set forth below:

1. (*a*) Improvising vocal "answers" to given phrases.
   (*b*) Playing extempore "answers" to given phrases.
   (*c*) Invention of a four-line musical stanza by four boys, each contributing one phrase capable of being carried on by the next.
2. (*a*) Playing an eight-bar sentence from memory (dictated by the teacher), and the insertion of Imperfect and Perfect Cadences therein.
   (*b*) Harmonizing at the piano a four-phrase melody dictated by the teacher.
   (*c*) Playing "phrase-wise" a succession of specified harmonies.
   (*d*) Aural analysis of a passage of harmony.
3. Invention of a song (melody and accompaniment) to a four-line stanza of words read by the teacher. (Four boys took part in this, and were given two minutes to think out their settings before playing them. Each one played and sang his version of Stevenson's "Bed in Summer" without hesitation.)
4. Extemporizing a short piano piece in simple Ternary form.
5. Vocal extemporization by three girls of a melody in Ternary form, a fourth girl harmonizing the cadences at the piano.
6. Playing an improvised accompaniment to a previously unheard song of some considerable difficulty, dictated twice by the teacher, and afterwards sung by a class to that accompaniment.
7. Examples of advanced modulation at the keyboard, and of extemporization upon given themes, by the elder students.

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III

ANOTHER department of musical teaching, intimately bound up with those that have already been considered — one, too, that is (or can be) of extreme value, particularly in school-life, as a means of extending and deepening an appreciation of the more worthy things in art — is that of choral singing. For some years past the choral-class has existed, at least in name, in most of our upper and middle-class schools; it has been impressively set forth in school prospectuses (sometimes as an "extra" for which a special fee has been payable); but it is true, I think, to say that it has not always been the great success that might have been hoped for. Its educational value has frequently been almost *nil*, and its use has degenerated into a forced service at some school function, such as a "breaking-up," or at some local bazaar, in order to add to the prevailing joyfulness of the occasion! Its place in the educational scheme has too seldom been realized; at times it has been given over to the tender mercies of a (doubtless admirable) piano-teacher who understood next-door-to-nothing of its direction and its possibilities, and frequently the whole thing has resulted in a mechanical "drumming" of the music into the ears of girls or boys who could not read half-a-dozen notes either from the staff, or in Sol-fa, by means of what one might call "brute force." One or two members of the class could possibly read *a little*, and all the rest leaned and lolled upon them in a spirit of helplessness and hopelessness!

The School Choral-class

Its frequent failure

Now, in this matter of school class-singing the Elementary schools have been much ahead of other schools. Of course there are exceptions, but in most cases class-singing has been, and is, a department of work to which much attention has been given in these Elementary schools, and in a few instances it has reached a standard of purity of tone, clearness of diction, and beauty of expression that cannot easily be surpassed.

The personality of the Teacher

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And the surprising part of it all is — as has been shown at some of the Competition Festivals held in various parts of the country — that many of these classes have been trained, not by professed musicians, but by men and women who, during the rest of the week, have been teaching history, arithmetic, or what not, but who have studied the requirements of singing-class direction, and have had the *personality* necessary to dominate and hold their children. I have seen and heard such classes, and the significant point is that the children love their work; they respond to the music; it grips them; for the time being they are living in a world different from that in which their ordinary lot is cast, and the effect on character and mental outlook is one that cannot be ignored by any impartial judge of such matters.

The advantages of the School Choral-class

What, then, are the advantages that may be claimed for the well-managed singing-class? They are many; I will merely mention those that are the most outstanding. First, there is that of bringing the pupils into communion with much pure and beautiful music, such as is represented by the national tunes and folk-songs of our own land and of other lands — a priceless heritage — and also the many two-part and three-part songs written by past and present composers, the study of which is a real education in music.

It need hardly be said that the teacher needs to exercise great care and judgment in the choice of his material, for it is an unfortunate fact that very many inferior writers are in the habit of turning out hundreds of silly, worthless things which are not only of no value as an uplift of the children's taste, but are a positive degradation of it. But, given that exercise of judgment of which I have spoken, the school singing-class may become in a very special sense a kind of "Appreciation Class," whose importance cannot well be over-rated. As a thoughtful North of England teacher has said, we can by its means "teach our children to love the best music for its own sake, to sing with simple, natural expression . . . and we can send them away from our schools with something that is really an education in the truest sense of the word, a bringing forth of the best that is in them, both of heart and of voice."

The Choral-class as a factor in the spread of appreciation

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Secondly, that most essential matter of fluent singing at sight, the foundation of so much that intimately concerns the musical advancement of the pupil, has here an opportunity of being brought into play, and it need hardly be said that progress in any department of musical work must be correspondingly slow and unintelligent where the sight-reading ability is weak and insufficient.[1]

Singing at sight

Thirdly, the singing-class has a very distinct value in the physical development of the child, for when it is conducted on right lines he has the chance of learning the art of correct breathing, the importance of which to health is being increasingly recognized at the present day. Indeed, many medical authorities consider that there are not a few ailments which may be checked, if not cured, by its means.

The health-giving influence of the Choral-class

Finally, as one has said in "Some Aims in Modern Musical Education," such a class is a most powerful lever — given the right teacher — "not only in the fostering of rhythmic, corporate action, but in the formation of character. Its influence is in some degree comparable to that of the playing-field in that, while personality counts, it demands, at the same time, subordination to discipline in the working-out of a common purpose and a common ideal. In this it is truly democratic, in the best sense of that much used, and much abused, word."

Its moral value

[1] While making the above assertion with the greatest possible emphasis, it is necessary to remind the inexperienced teacher that, especially in the case of the younger children, it would be the greatest mistake to limit the choice of songs to those they could read easily at sight. Some of the songs that are quite easy to sing, and well within the comprehension of the youngest child, are quite difficult so far as their notation is concerned. So it is important to remember that, at that early stage, what is known as *Rote-singing* must play a considerable part. There is no harm in this at all, provided that the teacher has at the back of his mind all the time the paramount necessity of constant endeavor to bring the standard of his pupils' sight-reading up to that point where it will be a real and ever increasing means of grasping readily and accurately the relation between sound and symbol, a power which is at the root of all progress.

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IV

WHEN we come to sum up the responsibilities of the music-teacher of to-day, the fact strikes us very forcibly that they are undoubtedly great, and I think that the first duty of any student of music, who contemplates following the teacher's career, is to consider most seriously, his qualifications for his task. Too often he has imagined that all that is required to enable him to become a teacher is the possession of a respectable degree of technical skill as a player or a singer, *plus* a certain amount of natural musicality. That, he has thought, is "stock-in-trade" sufficient for all purposes, and he has sallied forth to his teaching duties with that airy confidence which would not be devoid of humor were it not so serious, and often so disastrous, in its results. Now, there is a certain sense in which the difficulty of teaching is sometimes the greater when it is taken in hand by the highly gifted player, singer or composer; it costs him more effort to realize the pupil's limitations and deficiencies, and thus it is that, not infrequently, the great concert-artist is by no means the best teacher. He often lacks (*a*) the experience, in his own case, of past difficulties comparable in any sense with those of his pupil, (*b*) the analytic power that enables a teacher to probe the causes of failure, to see into the mind of the pupil, and to understand its working. I would not have it inferred from this that the highly gifted musician may permit himself to regard the career of the teacher with a supreme and lofty unconcern, as something beneath the notice of his artistic temperament, or to harbor in his mind the no less erroneous idea that, in order to educate others, it is not necessary that one's own musical attainments should be more than — well, respectable! The teacher, more and more, is being regarded as a person of vital importance to the community, and in order that we may be enabled to raise the whole status of this branch of our

The Music-teacher's qualifications

Importance of thorough Musicianship

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profession, it is imperative that its members shall be *fully equipped musicians*, alert and sensitive to music themselves, and sufficiently educated apart from their music to hold their own with the teachers of other subjects in the field of human activity. Therefore, we need the best men, the best women, in the teaching profession; not the weaklings, not the failures or the broken-down performers, or those who think they will "teach music" because they cannot get a living in any other way!

The next point for us to see, is that, during the earlier part of his student-life, the work of the would-be executive artist and that of the would-be teacher must run along parallel lines, and present the same external features. Both will be learning the *technique* of their art, gaining all that is implied in the word Musicianship, and steeping themselves in an atmosphere of musical activity and comradeship. And here I feel constrained to warn every music-student that one of the greatest evils to be fought against during his student days is that of a too early specialization upon any one subject — be it piano-playing, singing or anything else. Such undue specialization inevitably tends to produce narrowness of vision, one-sidedness and prejudice, and a painful lack of clear judgment which usually manifests itself in the inability to view things in any kind of true proportion. Let me guard against any misconception; I am not, of course, speaking against specialization as it is seen in the case of the prominent specialist-teachers of the day. Such men have reached their present position by a kind of natural evolution; as a rule they are men whose general musicianship has been cared for sedulously in the past, whose knowledge and sympathies are wide and extensive, but whose notable powers in one particular sphere have earned for them a reputation which demands that the whole of their time and energy, in a professional sense, shall be directed into that one channel. By this means they are enabled to penetrate more deeply into the technicalities and subtleties of the particular branch of the art which they profess, to the enrichment of that art and the great benefit of the community. But the point is that they have built upon a firm foundation; they are musicians first, specialists afterwards. Between the case of such men and that of

Unwise early specialization

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those students — unfortunately, by no means rare — who habitually neglect the broader aspects of musicianship and general culture in order to give their whole time to one subject, whatever that may be, there is a great gulf fixed.

The divergence of the paths

But during the period of preparation there must, sooner or later, come a time — and it is usually sooner than most people care to trouble themselves about — when the student must decide in his own mind what his life-work is to be; is it to be the platform, or is it to be the class-room? Now, it is a fact that, as was stated in an article in the *Times* Educational Supplement:

> "The majority of students enter their colleges with the belief that they are going to do anything but teach. They are going to sing in opera or oratorio, become cathedral organists, or play the piano or the violin to admiring audiences in every capital from Petrograd to New York. It is only during their college careers, *or after that career is over*,[1] that they discover that they are going to spend . . . [their] existence in teaching."

Now, at a certain point in the education of the music student, the path which he and his fellows have alike been following must bifurcate, and the future training necessary for the executive artist must differ somewhat materially from that necessary for the teacher. The concert-player, for example, need not set himself to study educational principles as must the would-be teacher, and it is not of the same urgency that the latter shall spend all those many laborious hours in conquering technical difficulties which must fall to the lot of the aspirant for platform success.

Training of Teachers

We hear to-day, on all sides, much talk and much discussion about the training of teachers; there has been during the last few years a great awakening of the social consciousness to the fact that it may be desirable that a teacher, of whatever subject, should be able to give some palpable evidence of fitness for his task, and all through the educational world at the present time this one topic holds the field. The Secretary of the Teachers' Registration Council, speaking at an educational conference recently, said:

[1] The italics are the Author's.

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"It was often stated that the teacher is born, not made, but this probably meant that he was greatly helped by certain qualities of personality which enabled him to get work out of his pupils and to keep them in order. Given these, it still remained necessary for him to have a knowledge of the principles of teaching and acquaintance with child nature. The born musician was not necessarily a good teacher, because his mind was devoted to an art other than the art of teaching."

Teachers' deficiencies

Now, the lack of a training in teaching shows itself most acutely and disastrously in the region of class-work. Over and over again, both in the Choral-class and in the Aural training class, many an otherwise sound musician has proved a complete failure, or at best compares very unfavorably with those who deal with subjects other than that of music. This is one very real difficulty in connection with the securing of the right kind of teachers for certain types of school appointments. Times out of number it is found that a candidate for a school post is a good player, and knows the technique of piano teaching fairly well, but is entirely incapable of class-management; another has the requisite training and personality for class-work, but is hopelessly unmusical; yet another can deal with the voice-production side of the singing-class, but knows nothing of ear-training — and so on. It is obviously impossible for our schools, at any rate the majority of them, to engage specialists in all these branches, so we have here a very pressing problem waiting to be solved.

Personality

It is clear, then, that the kind of teacher increasingly demanded on all sides to-day is one who unites to real musicianly qualities the ***ability to teach***, which in its turn connotes both the knowledge derived from a training in the teaching art, and also the possession of that indefinable force we call Personality. A candidate in a recent examination described this quality as signifying the possession of " patience, charitableness and all other similar virtues! " Without requiring such an extensive array of moral perfections as this, I think we must see that personality means ***power*** — the power to attract, the power to compel, the power to sympathize and the power to arouse enthusiasm. Without this, the most brilliant technical achievements, the most elaborate training, will

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avail but little. Given, however, its possession in fair measure, the teacher, if he add the requisite degree of workmanlike efficiency, may go forth conquering and to conquer. As I said before, we need the best men and the best women in the ranks of our music-teachers, men and women who realize the importance of their work, and are prepared to give themselves whole-heartedly to the difficult, the trying, yet most worthwhile task of helping others to perceive something, at least, of the beauties which perchance have been revealed to them.

The best men and women needed as Teachers

To every aspirant for the teacher's office I would say: Remember that your pupil will not feel an enthusiasm you do not feel yourself; that you have to develop not only his powers of execution, but also draw out his capacities of *appreciation*. Do not make him a mere receptacle for "items of useful knowledge," but awaken in him the desire to know, help him to use his own initiative by calling upon his creative and constructive faculties, and see to it that your great aim shall be to make him *musically observant*, not merely of details of execution, but of the beauties of the music itself, its art and its workmanship, as his growing powers of perception admit.

Remember, also, that he who is himself too proud or too busy to learn is not fit to teach; we must, to use the striking expression of the great Archbishop Temple, feed our pupils from "an ever-running stream," and keep constantly before us, when we are tempted to relax our efforts and fall into the deadly apathy of routine, the thought that we only are at our best, our teaching only takes on its most inspiring form, when we ourselves have seen some fresh vision of beauty or of truth.

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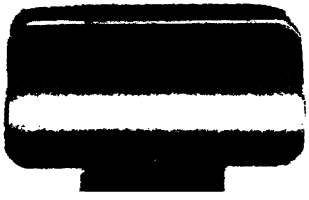

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